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AMMAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1999, DHUL QADAH 1, 1419

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Policemen refused amnesty in Biko

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) - South Africa's truth commission on Tuesday rejected amnesty for four former secunty policemen involved in the death of black consciousness leader Steve Biko in 1977. The truth and reconciliation commission's amnesty committee said Harold Snyman, Daniel Siebert, Jacobus Beneke and Rubin Marx had "clearly conspired to conceal the truth of what led to the tragic death of Biko." A fifth officer, Gideon Niewoudt, 45, had his amnesty application refused in January.

Georgian police break up protest supporting priest

TBILISI (AP) -- Police used batons and electric prods to break up an unsanctioned protest in Tbilisi on Tuesday by a controversial priest and about 200 of his supporters. The protesters were trying to march to the parliament after a court postponed its decision on the priest's appeal to win back his parish church. Georgia's Orthodox patriarchate stripped Father Vasily of his church post in 1995, accusing him of pursuing an anti-Christian policy through his efforts to introduce ecumenism. The police beat the demonstrators. who included father Vasily and other priests, and piled them into buses to be transported out of the city. From there they must return to Tbilisi on foot.

Cholera kills 42 in Zambian capital

LUSAKA (AFP) - Cholera has killed 42 people in the the past month, health officials said Tuesday. Local government officials have banned street vending of foodstuffs and alerted hotels and restaurants to the threat. "Forty-two people have died so far. We are putting in place preventive measures by banning open vending of foodstuffs and have hired companies to work on drainage," Council spokesman Daniel Musoka told reporters. Cholera has also been reported in other centres around the country. with 10 deaths recorded in the northern provincial capital of

27 die in Indian bus accident

NEW DELHI (AFP) -

Twenty-seven people were killed Tuesday when a speeding bus crashed into a ditch and overturned in the Indian state of West Bengal, officials said. Eighty others were injured in the accident in Hooghly district when the driver lost control of the bus, the Press Trust of India reported. "At least 53 of the injured are in a critical condition," the state's Home Minister Buddhadev Bhanacharjee said. Police and local villagers were still engaged in rescue work,

28 dead in Cote d'Ivoire accident

ABIDJAN (AFP) - Twentyeight people were killed and 42 were injured when a speeding bus overturned on a road in central Cote d'Ivoire, hospital sources said Tuesday. The accident occurred Monday near Bouake, some 300 kilometres north of Abidjan, apparently the result of a blown tyre. According to an initial investigation, the bus, with 72 passengers aboard. first struck a tree and then plunged into a ravine. The 42 injured, including 10 in a serious condition, were taken to hospital in Bouake.

Jordan plays down protests over transfer of Al Aqsa mufti's office

Israeli anger at 'normal' decision hasty — minister

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN - Jordan on Tuesday played down Israeli protests against a Palestinian National Authority decision to relocate the headquarters of Al Aqsa Mosque's mufti, but said that any Israeli move to allow Jews to pray inside the mosque will bear negative consequences.

What happened is a normal thing that does not deserve all this fuss. Jordan was aware of the step and we did not object." Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi said.

The minister was commenting on PNA-appointed. Mufti Ekrima Sabri's decision to transfer his office, currently inside the compound that hosts Al Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem, to a nearby office in the same building. mufti's decision angered Israeli officials.

Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said Monday his government has appealed to the United States to stop the mufti from moving into the new

Israeli security officials were quoted as describing Sabri's step as "provoca-

"If Arafat's mufti moves in, then there is no reason why Israel should not allow Jews to pray at Al Aqsa Mosque," an Israeli security official, who was quoted by a Western newspaper, said. Israel rejects any PNA

control in Jerusalem and claims the Holy City, which it seized in 1967, as its eternal capital. Jordan and the PNA share

the administration of the Islamic Waqf (trust) in Jerusalem. Israel accepts Jordan's role but disapproves of the PNA's. Abbadi said the Palestin-

ian decision does not deserve any hasty reaction from Israeli authorities, adding that the mosque is an Islamic site and no one is allowed to pray there except Muslims.

"Sheikh Ekrima is the preacher of the mosque. He was conducting his work from an office there." Abba-"He decided to transfer to

another office in the same building. We believe that there is no problem at all and we have not protested this move," Abbadi told the Jordan Times.

"The mosque is Islam's third holiest shrine and non-Muslims are forbidden from praying inside the mosque," the minister

The chairman of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research, Al al Bayt Foundation, Nasseriddine Assad, said any Israeli move to allow Jews to pray in Al Aqsa Mosque will draw the wrath of the Islamic World.

"These threats are not strange to the Jews," Assad, a former higher education minister, said.

"They always abuse Muslim holy sites, and that is their history, and nothing can stop them but force. If such a situation occurs, it will anger Muslims not only in Palestine but in the whole Muslim World," he

Jewish fundamentalists' attempts to pray in Al Aqsa Mosque caused a bloody confrontation between Palestinians and the Israeli army in 1992, in which 20 Muslim worshippers were shot and killed by Israeli soldiers inside the mosque.

Jewish extremists claim that the mosque was built on the ruins of the Temple of Solomon, which was destroyed by Romans in the first century, and have repeatedly disclosed their plan to destroy Al Aqsa



KING ABDULLAH VISITS ORPHANS: Following the footsteps of his late father King Hussein, His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday meets with children during a visit to the Dar Al Bir orphanage in Hummar. King Abdullah, accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Rania and Her Royal Highness Princess Zein, inspected the various sections of the orphanage, which is home to 230 orphans ranging from four months to 14 years in age. King Abdullah's visit to Dar Al Bir is the first since he assumed his constitutional duties on Feb. 7 following the death of King Hussein, who donated Hashemiyeh Palace as a home for the orphans. King Abdullah voiced his appreciation for the orphanage staff for their efforts to care for the orphans and provide decent living conditions for them (Petra photo)

Turkey announces capture of Ocalan

PKK leader taken in undercover operation in Kenya

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey announced Tuesday it had captured its enemy number one, rebel Kurdish separatist leader Abdullah Ocalan, in an undercover operation and had hauled him back to face trial in a Turkish court.

Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), was apparently abducted in Nairobi on Monday after leaving the Greek ambassador's residence en route to the city's airport, according to Greek officials.

But the Kurdistan Information Centre in Bonn said Ocalan had been kidnapped Monday from the Greek embassy in Nairobi, where he had taken refuge since Feb. 2, and was then taken to Turkey.

The development caused immediate diplomatic tensions, with Greece and Kenya trading accusations of recklessness, while Israel flatly denied reports that its Mossad secret service was involved in the operation.

Protests by Kurds across Europe in show support of Ocalan turned violent as news



Abdullah Ocalan

of the abduction spread, with demonstrators hostages inside several Greek diplomatic premises and at the Kenyan embassy in Bonn.

But in Ankara, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit was jubilant in announcing the capture of Ocalan, wanted on charges of treason and terrorism in connection with his movement's 15-year-old violent campaign in southeast Turkey for an

independent Kurdistan. "As of 3:00 a.m. [0100] GMT) this morning, the head of the separatist terror organisation Abdullah Ocalan is in Turkey," Ecevit said. "He was arrested in an undercover operation. We had been fol-

ious countries," he said. His voice choking with emotion. Ecevit added: "May God save our nation and all mankind from terrorism and

The prime minister refused to give details of the operation. but stressed neither Ocalan nor anvone else had been injured.

"He will now be made to answer for his deeds by the independent courts of Turkey." the prime minister declared. We said that wherever he

was hiding in the world, we would get him. This state has kept its word. It has kept its vows to the mothers of our martyrs," he said.

More than 30,000 people have died in the fighting between Turkish forces and the PKK, according to the Turkish government.

Ecevit called on PKK members to give themselves up, telling them: "You have now reached the end of your road." "Everyone must know that nothing can be achieved in

added. since October, when he was flushed out of Syria under the threat of Turkish military

Turkey by terrorism," he

action. He arrived in Rome in November and immediately requested political asylum, declaring that he renounced violence and was seeking a peaceful resolution to Kurdish demands for a homeland.

Turkey demanded his extradition, sparking a diplomatic row with Italy and other European powers, which showed a reluctance to intervene and risk upheaval within their own large Kurdish and Turkish minorities. Ocalan left Italy in mid-January, beginning a prolonged search aboard a small private plane for a country of shelter.

(Continued on page 2)

King receives condolences from Bangladeshi premier

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday received Raghadan Bangladeshi Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina, who offered

her country's condolences on the passing away of King Sheikh Hasina also offered

her condolences to HRH Royal Court.

The King and Prince Hamzah expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Bangladeshi premier, who later visited the grave of the late King and recited verses of the Holy Koran and laid wreaths on his grave.

Also Tuesday, King Abdul-lah received U.S. Congressman Sam Gejdenson, who offered his condolences on the death of King Hussein.

The King voiced his appreciation for the visit of the congressman, who later met with Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib and House Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali. King Abdullah received General Ali Ben Majed Al Omari, the minister in charge of the Omani armed forces,

who offered his condolences.

Omari delivered a letter from Sultan Qaboos dealing with bilateral ties and issues of common concern to Jordan and Oman. Abdullah King

received Princess Sheikha Fatema Bint Mubarak, wife of Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, president of the United Arab Emirates, and Al Nahayan, UAE minister of information and culture.

as well as Sheikha Sabikeh. wife of the crown prince of Bahrain. They offered their condolences to the King, Her Majesty Queen Noor and the members of the Royal family. King Abdullah received a

cable from Pakistani President Mohammad Rafiq Tarar, who congratulated the King upon the assumption of his constitutional duties. Also yesterday, King Abdullah received cables of condolences on the passing away of King Hussein from the president of Malta and the prime minister of the Netherlands.

Earlier, the Bangladeshi premier held a meeting with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh to review issues of common concern to the two countries.

Tarawneh said Jordan is keen on promoting cooperation with Bangladesh in various fields. Sheikh Hasina expressed her deep grief over the passing away of the late King and paid tribute to his great contributions to the

Later, in a statement to Jordan Television, Sheikh Hasina said the government and people of Bangladesh have deep respect for the late King, whom she said had dedicated his life to serving his nation and the cause of

Tarawneh said he and Sheikh Hasina discussed issues of common concern, including combating poverty. an issue in which Bangladesh has achieved major successes through providing soft loans for projects

to needy people. He said Jordan can benefit from the Bangladeshi experience in providing loans to the needy and in governmental cooperation with charitable organisations to deal with

Kurdish protesters storm Greek embassies across Europe

LONDON (AFP) - Kurdish protesters stormed Greek embassies across Europe from London to Moscow on Tuesday in a massive and sometimes violent show of support for outlawed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan. The coordinated protests

erupted even before the govemment in Ankara announced that Ocalan had been snatched in an undercover operation and was in Turkey where he would face trial for terrorism, a capital offence in that country.

In London, Vienna, The Hague and elsewhere protesters seized hostages inside Greek diplomatic buildings, while in Bonn two hostages were held inside the Kenyan

In Paris, police ended an occupation in the Kenyan embassy, arresting 16 Kurds after negotiations failed with occupiers who had threatened to set fire to themselves and seven embassy staff held

hostage. Police also cleared out 15 Kurds from the Greek

embassy in the capital. In Bern, Kurds assumed to be PKK members continued their occupation of the Greek embassy, calling for Ocalan to be returned to western Europe and vowing to "fight

until the last drop of blood" for their leader. In The Hague, mounted police and police with does charged a demonstration and arrested 50 as they headed for the Greek ambassador's residence where protesters held the ambassador's wife, his eight-year-old son and a Fil-

ipino worker. Elsewhere, Kurdish protesters armed with petrol threatened to set themselves alight. A young Kurdish woman was seriously injured after she set herself on fire in Copenhagen and in Germany two Kurdish women also set themselves on fire, suffering

serious burns. In Stockholm about 30 Kurdish protesters, who were occupying the Greek consulate, left the building peacefully in late afternoon and were taken to a police

station for questioning, police said. The Kurds could face forced entry charges, police

In Vienna, Kurdish protesters were still holding seven people hostage in the Greek embassy including the ambassador and his wife, vowing to remain there until their demands are met, officials said.

The ambassador, who refused to consent to police storming the building, told Greek television by telephone that the situation could "last several days."

Two staff were held hostage in the Kenyan embassy in Bonn. The Kurds targeted the Kenyan embassy after Greece admitted Tuesday it had sheltered Ocalan at its ambassador's residence in Nairobi until he was snatched after leaving for the airport.

A Greek caretaker was held hostage inside the Greek embassy in London, where some 20 Kurds occupied the building and around 200 others staged a protest outside. Negotiators and the Greek

ambassador were trying to persuade the demonstrators to leave peacefully.

French police earlier stormed the Greek consulate in Strasbourg, eastern France, to dislodge about 30 Kurds. Around 100 Kurds also gathered outside the Council of Europe building in Strasbourg, while in the southern French port of Marseilles 50 Kurds left the Greek consulate building peacefully.

In Moscow, special interior ministry forces surrounded the Greek embassy after around 60 Kurds stormed the building. The protesters quit the building around two hours later.

In Geneva, 25 Kurdish militants, armed with iron bars, forced their way into the United Nations building overnight, using the arrival of a delivery lorry to storm the gates. Police said the Kurds had demanded the U.N. pledge to guarantee Ocalan's safety.

Around 150 Kurds staged a protest outside the Greece embassy in Beirut.



Kurdish protesters Tuesday occupy the residence of the Greek ambassador to the Netherlands in the Hague in protest against the detention of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan. Three people, including the wife and child of the Greek amhassador, were being held by the protesters (AP

11.11

Associations, parties to proceed with delayed 'national conference'

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The professional associations and the opposition parties ended more than six months of strife with a meeting late yesterday and decided to finally proceed with the much talked-about National Conference for Reform and Salvation.

At the meeting, held at the headquarters of the Islamic Action Front, four union leaders representing the Council of Presidents of Jordan's 13 professional associations presented to the parties extensive studies detailing strategies and policies in a variety of fields ranging from the economy and democratic reforms to normalisation of ties with Israel and relations with other Arab

Around 150 representatives from parties and syndicates, youth and student clubs, as well as other civil society institutions, launched the National Conference last June.

A "National Salvation Plan" to counter government policies and calling for a halt to privatisation and economic liberalisation, more public freedoms, as well as a 180-degree turn in the country's traditional pro-Westem policies, was expected to be issued by September.

differences soon emerged, first with fierce protests by many independent politicians that the modus operandi of the conference was undemocratic and that the "salimposed by the organisers on the whole conference.

The ambitious project risked total collapse on Aug. 2, when the professional associations supposedly accounting for 60 per cent of the conference's participants — unilaterally declared an eight-month post-

ponement of the conference. Association leaders argued that such a wide-ranging platform needed to outline implementation strategies and not only issue political slogans in order to be effective. Hence, the associations said an eightmonth preparation period was

Yesterday's meeting was not the first time that parties and associations sat at the same table since the postponement decision, a union leader pointed out, but the associations' detailed studies on strategies to pursue the "salvation master plan" were finally officially

"The parties said they will study the papers we presented, and we will meet again in three weeks," said Hosni Abu Gheida, president of the 35,000member Jordan Engineers

The next step in the already troubled life of the yet unborn National Conference will be the draft of a joint paper including both the associations' and

Jordan opens its borders to Palestinian newspapers, TV

AMMAN (AP) — Jordan has agreed to allow Palestinian newspapers and magazines to go on sale in the Kingdom for the first time since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the director general of the Press and Publications Department said Tuesday.

Jordan will also broadcast a 30 to 60-minute programme produced by the Palestine Television Corp. once a month, lyad Qattan told the Associated Press. Qattan said it would take

two to three days for the Palestinian publications to appear on the country's newstands as arrangements needed to be concluded with local distributors.

He had instructed all airports and border crossings to grant access to the papers, he

AMMAN — The prosecutor

general has ordered two politi-

cal activists detained for "ille-

gal political activities," a senior

interior ministry official said

The official, who asked not

to be named, said that Talal

Abu Riyaleh was detained on

Monday at the Iraqi border on

his way back home from

Baghdad, while Navef Mah-

moud Judeh was arrested for

leaflets on Feb. 7, the day His

Majesty King Hussein passed

involved in illegal activities,"

Tuesday.

More than half of Jordan's 4.2 million people are said to be of Palestinian origin.

Newspapers from Arab East Jerusalem and the West Bank can thus expect to find a substantial market in the Among the best-known

Palestinian titles are the dailies Al-Quds Al-Ayam. al-Shaab, all published in Arab East Jerusalem, and the weekly magazine. Al-Mahd, which is published in Bethle-

After the 1967 war, the government said Israel's Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank prevented the publications' distribution

The first television broad-

cast will occur toward the end of February, Qattan said. Palestine Television is based in Gaza City.

National Authority have agreed to conduct market surveys of viewers in each other's territories, he said.

The law has come under heavy fire by journalists and human rights organisations in Jordan and abroad as being restrictive. The goverment of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said after its enactment on Sept. 1, 1998 that it was encouraging a soft application of the law.

Jordan and the Palestinian

Qattan said the Palestinian papers would have to respect the Press and Publications

'Iraq must be consulted over U.N. proposals' into a dictator, neither under

DUBAI (AFP) — Iraq must be consulted first if any U.N. Security Council initiative is to stand a chance of renewing cooperation with Baghdad, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf insisted on Tuesday.

"Any question on which it fails to consult us in advance... will have no chance of suc- ... does not have the right to turn

cess," Sahhaf said in an interview with the Emirati newspaper Al Khaleej.

Pro-Iranian Hizbollah militants display a SAGGER anti-tank wire guided missile in

the Iqlim at-Touffah region near the self-declared Israeli security zone in south

Lebanon. The group took Western and Arab journalists in a tour to their front posi-

tions in south Lebanon from where they launch attacks against Israeli troops and their

allies South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen. The SAGGER can engage targets at

ranges of 500 to 3,000 metres and penetrates over 400mm of armour (AFP photo)

"If they refuse a dialogue with us, they will not be authorised to come to us and we will not be concerned with whatever they are planning," he said.

"The Security Council is of course a sovereign body, but it the U.N. charter nor international law," the foreign minister said.

In January, Iraq already rejected a U.N. initiative to set up three panels to review ties with Baghdad in the wake of the Desert Fox air war waged by the United States and Britain the previous month.

Turkey announces capture of Ocalan

him under pressure from Ankara, leading him to Russia

everywhere in Europe.

A statement by the JEA said

sador after learning that Ocalan was in Nairobi and demanded that the Kurdish leader leave.

destination. Across Europe, the PKK showed its muscle among the large Kurdish diaspora, staging protests that it said would only be called off once Turkey had

guaranteed Ocalan's security. The demonstrators held hostages inside Greek diplo-

The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre...5856856

Luzmila4630195

Khalidi Maternity......4614281/6 Akileh Maternity.......1642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity_.4642362

Malhas, J. Amman.4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5607431 Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Musher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali566+164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir.....4775111/26

Queen Alia Hospital.......5157100 Amal Hospital5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre ..5353000

Gavi.

National

Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

Basma

Catholic

Nafees

Hospital

..(09)983323

Hospital

.(09)900560

Hospital

Hospital

Hospital

.(02)272275

...(02)275555

ZARQA:

Zarga

IRBID:

Roman

lbn Al

matic buildings in London, in Bonn, two hostages were held inside the Kenyan embassy. Kurdish women in Copenhagen, Berlin and London suffered serious injuries after setting themselves on fire.

The United States, which had maintained that Ocalan should face trial, welcomed the arrest and called on Kurdish militants to end their protest

Turkey stepped up security at its embassies in 21 countries and asked governments for assistance to prevent attacks on Turkish citizens.

Ocalan potentially faces the death penalty on conviction, although Turkey says it has not carried out an execution since

NEWS IIN BRIEF

Tarawneh meets with WB official

AMMAN (Petra) --- Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Tuesday met with visiting World Bank Middle East Department Director Inder Sud, who conveyed his staff's heartfelt condolences over the passing of King Hussein. Sud wished Jordan continued progress and prosperity under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah and expressed hope that King Abdullah will follow the path that his late father charted, adding that it has won Jordan respect appreciation and credibility on an international scale. The World Bank official lauded the investment climate in Jordan. noting in particular Jordan's achievements in the educational, health and environmental sectors. Sud renewed the international financial institutions' support for Jordan to encourage economic growth in the Kingdom.

Prince Ali receives Circassian delegation

AMMAN (Petra) --- HRH Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein Tuesday received at the Royal Court a delegation representing the Circassians in Turkey, who arrived here to convey their condolences over the passing of King Hussein. Prince Ali thanked the delegation for their kind gesture and wished them continued good health and prosperity.

Royal Decrees endorse appointments

AMMAN (Petra) — Three Royal Decrees issued Tuesday endorsed the Judicial Council's appointments and transfers of judges at various courts as well as at the Ministry of Justice, Hani Salim Rafati was appointed as a judge at the Court of Appeals, in charge of income tax cases, Mohammad Fahmi Ornari, as a judge at the Justice Ministry, Judge Khalifa Suleiman was transferred to the Irbid Court of Appeals, Judge Aref Taher to the Customs Appeals Court, Judge Marmoun Ghalayini to the Customs Court of First Instance, Judge Mohammad Abdul Qader to Ain Al Basha Magistrate Court, Adnan Muhaideen to Karak Municipal Court, Judge Hassan Hazaimeh to Sahab Magistrate Court, Judge Ahmad Bahadleh to Shobak Magistrate Court, Judge Mohammad Siksik to Ay Magistrate Court in Karak Governorate, Judge Izzat Khataibeh to Bani Kananah, Judge Falah Hussein El Tayem to the Customs Court of First Instance and Judge Firas Jarrah to Irbid Magistrate Court.

Cabinet endorses diplomatic postings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday endorsed a list of appointees as diplomatic attachés at the Foreign Ministry. The list includes Haroun Hassan, Ihab Omeish, Maan Khreisat, Aseel Al Tal, Fawaz Bilbeisi, Nader Tarawneh, Mohammad Shabbar, Mu'taz Hiyasat, Sinan Al Majali, Isam Bdour, Sami Ghosheh, Sabah Rafi'ee, Hamzah Shraideh, Amjad Mubaideen, Tharwat Nu'eirnat and Mohammad Salah

Instituto Cervantes suspends cultural activities

AMMAN (J.T.) — In observance of the period of mourning over the passing of His Majesty King Hussein, Instituto Cervantes. Spanish Cultural Centre in Animan, has announced the suspension of all its cultural activities until May.

Rain expected today

AMMAN (Petra) — Fair weather conditions are expected to continue today, with a drop in temperatures and rainfall at night, the Meteorology Department said Tuesday. Rainfall is to start late tonight in the northern parts of the Kingdom and spread gradually over the country with southwesterly and mod-

France, Qatar hold war games in Gulf

DOHA (AFP) - French and Qatari troops on Tuesday wound up several days of live-fire joint exercises in this Arab Gulf state, the official news agency QNA said. Qatari infantry and combat helicopters took part in the exercises, which aimed "to boost the fighting capacity" of the emirate's army, it said. The two states have been linked by a defence pact since 1994 and hold regular joint land, sea and air exercises. France supplies 80 per cent of the weapons used by the 10,000-strong Qatari

Bajammal in S. Arabia for border talks

RIYADH (AP) — Yemen's foreign minister, Abdul Kader Bajammal, arrived here Tuesday to pursue a solution to the two countries' border dispute, Yemeni diplomats said. Bajammal's meetings will include technical discussions related to border demarcation, the diplomats in Riyadh said. They spoke on con-

06:50 ...

PRAYER TIMES

06:13	(Sunrise)Duha				
11:50	Dhuhr				
14:58					
17:26	Maghreb				
18:44	'Isha				
06:13 (Sunrise)Duha 11:50 Dhuhr 14:58 'Asr 17:26 Maghreb 18:44 Isha					

CHUKCHES

Sweifieh, Tel. 5920740 Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785 St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590 Terra Sancta Church Tel.

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Church Tel. Anglican 4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox

Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932 St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Tel. 4637440 Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of the Annunciation

Church of Presentation, Sweifieh Tel. 5920146 The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

the otheral told the Jordan Times.

Two political activists detained

"If interrogation implicates him, he will be referred to the court for trial, if not, he will be released." he added.

The official declined to give further details about the nature of these activities but said Abu Riyaleh, a close associate of the leading opposition figure Laith Shbeilat, is a member of the powerful Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) and is known for his frequent visit to the Iraqi capital.

The wife of Abu Riyaleh said her husband was arrested away.
Talal was detained followat the borders and she was informed by the driver who ing information that he is being brought him that he was detained by security forces

The Baptist Church Tel.

The Armenian Catholic

The Armenian Orthodox

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the

Warm weather conditions will

prevail during the day becom-

ing cool at night. Skies will be

partly cloudy with a chance of

scattered showers and winds

southwesterly moderate to

active. In Aqaba, it will be

moderate to warm, cloudy.

winds northerly moderate

becoming southerly moderate

to active in the afternoon, and

Deserts04/19

Jordan Valley10/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 19, Aqaba 22

Humidity readings: Amman

47 per cent, Aqaba 44 per

Amman

Aqaba

Department of Meteorology

Church Tel. 4771331

Church Tel. 4775261

4628052

without giving any specific reason."

"Until now we do not know his whereabouts and we have informed the JEA to inquire about him," the wife said.

The official said Judeh, a member of the illegal Tahreer Party (Islamic liberation), will also be referred to the court for trial "soon."

Al Tahreer, which was established in the early fifties, is the only illegal party in Jordan.

Last year, more than 24 party activists, including their leader Ata Abu Rishteh, were tried before the State Security Court on "lese majeste" charges.

it will urge the authorities to

tures expected today in the fol-

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Afif Shukri......4898863

Dr. Nidal Al Dableh4827195

Dr. Sa'id Tawfig......4788285

Dr. Hanna Mansour 4750197

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy ... 5537004

Ruko Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

Dr. Amin Abu Ideh (02)244468

Fou'ad Pharmacy .(02)275360

Dr. Ratib Atallah.....(05)994424

Palestine Pharmacy..(05)983562

..05/18

.06/17

.04/17

.04/19

Evangelical Free Church Tel. Following are the tempera-

Ajloun ...

Um Qays .

Madaba

Petra ...

Dead Sea

Jerash

Bonaya Godana said he had confronted the Greek ambas-

(Continued from page 1)

Syria had earlier expelled

Sightings of him were reported in a number of countries, but he was denied refuge

Greece, which has strained relations with Turkey, on Tuesday admitted it gave him shelter - "for humanitarian reasons" — for 12 days at its ambassador's residence in

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Res-

Civil Defence Emergency....,199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade......4617101

Highway Police......5343402

Public Security Dept.....4630321

Hotel Complaints.......5605800 Price Complaints.......5661176

Water & Sewenge Complaints 4897467

Antman Municipality Com-

Telephone Information (directo-

Central Amman Telephone Repairs

Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority .5815615

Electric Power Co....4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport ...44-53200

HOSPITALS

The Arab Centre for Heart and Spe-

Blood Bank.....

Traffic olice.....

plaints

ry assistance)

Overseas Calls ...

Radio Jordan

AMMAN:

...... 4775121

..4896390

... 4787111

..4623101

_4774111

Ocalan, however, left the premises on Monday with the intention of going to the Netherlands, but vanished while en route to Nairobi airport, Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangolos said in "The government immedi-

ately requested for his expatriation from the country to which the Greek ambassador agreed after consultations with his minister in Athens," Godana said in Nairobi, adding that Athens knew Ocalan's

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR ..(02)7101372, (02)7103101 Hospital ...(02)7102831, (02)7102011 Speciality Hospital(02)7103100

Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL **AIRPORT**

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44153200-5, where it should always he verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:30Damascus (RJ) 08:35Jeddah (RJ) 08:50 Dubai. Abu Dhabi (RJ) 09:55Larnaca (RJ)

15:00 .New York. Amsterdam (RJ) 16:25London (RJ) 17:20[stanbul (RJ) 18:00 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ) 18:25Paris, Brussels (RJ) 19:15Madrid. Berlin (RJ) 21:30Rome, Vienna (RJ) 23:30Beirut (RJ)Cairo (RJ) 02:50 Other Flights

...Cairo (MS)

.....Jeddah (SV)Kuwait (KU)Tunis (TU) 13:20Bahrain (GF) 14:05Rome (AZ) 15:05Vienna (QS) 15:30Algiers (AH) 18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK) 18:40Beirut (ME) 19:15Frankfurt (LH) 00:55 London, Damascus (BA) 01:25Athens (OA) 02:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights 08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)

09:35. Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW) 16:00. Aqaba tarriving at Marka Airport) (RW) 17:45 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) 18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at

19:45 .. ----...... Colombo (RJ) 20:00 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ) 20:10 Beirut (RJ) 20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ) 20:15Bombay (RJ) ..New Delhi (RJ)

DEPARTURES

08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

10:20 Rome (RJ)

12:15London (RJ)

...Istanbul (RJ)

21:00 ... Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ) 21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ) 22:45Sanaa (RJ) Other Flights 06:30 Lamaça (CY) 07:25 Damascus, London (BA) 07:25Paris (AF) 12:00 ...Medina, Jeddah (SV) 13:20Kuwait (KU) 14:10Bahrain (GF) 14:10 Tunis (TU) 15:30 Vienna (OS) 15:30Rome (AZ) 16:20Shariqah (AH) 19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK) 00:35Amsterdam (KL)

02:45 Athens (OA) Royal Wings (RW) Flights 08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Air-DOIT) (RW) (RW)

15:15 Haifa (from Marka Airport) 16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport)(RW) 20:30 ... Acaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Near receives Ba WA Sciem Vesterday

Home

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Manual Commence of the Commenc

Rania Abdullah, Princess Basma

Bint Talal, Princess Taghreed

Mohammad, King Hussein's

daughters: Princess Alia, Princess

Aisha, Princess Zein and Princess

Raiyah, as well as Princess Alia Al

Queen Noor also received

numerous letters of condolences

from heads of state and officials

including the President of Colom-

bia Andres Pastrana Arango,

Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus of

the Netherlands, Queen Margrethe

of Denmark, King Harald and

Oueen Sonya of Norway, the King

and Queen of Nepal, Prince and

Princess Takamando of Japan,

King Michael and Queen Anne of

Romania, Prince Rainier of Mona-

co. Prince Mohammad of Moroc-

co, President of Iceland Olafur

Grimsson, Prince Philippe of Bel-

gium, Kurt Waldheim, President

of Austria Thomas Klestil and

Prince Bernard of the Netherlands.

Health news

By Rana Awwad

AMMAN - The Rodents and

Insects Control Department claims

it has full control over rats that

could cause inconvenience to over

two million citizens living in and

around the capital, said an Amman

Following complaints in the

Zarqa Municipality that rats had

become a widespread problem,

Department Director Bakir Abbadi

said his institute was extending

equal services to affluent and low-

income areas under its jurisdiction,

covering an area of 520 square

According to the most recent

survey conducted by the depart-

ment as part of an ongoing process,

only two out of each 100 areas

where rat infestation is suspected

"The results should alleviate the

concern of many, especially as

they conform with the World

Health Organisation's minimum

recommended rat percentages."

Abbadi told the Jordan Times.

"Jordan is among the cleanest

countries in the region, and we

pride ourselves in being ranked as

an advanced state by the WHO in

The department, established in

1980, carries out regular surveys

throughout the year in all areas that

could attract rodents and insects.

rodent control."

have been found to contain rats.

Municipality official.

kilometres.

Faisal and Farah Daghestani.

Home News

Bab Al Salam, yeşterday (Petra photo)

AMMAN (J.T.) - Her Majesty

Queen Noor Tuesday received the

Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina at Bab Al Salam,

The prime minister said that

Bangladesh observed three days

of mourning for the death of His

Majesty King Hussein because he

was a "great person and good

Queen Noor said that King Hus-sein, as a "devout Muslim," always

devoted special attention to Islam

The Queen added that His

Majesty King Abdullah and the

entire family are dedicated to

keeping the "spirit of His Majesty

King Hussein alive at every level."

The prime minister briefed the

Queen on micro-credit projects for

women in Bangladesh and extend-

ed an invitation to Queen Noor to

visit her country and the projects.

Queen Noor said the Grameen

Government to

build diabetes

treatment centre

AMMAN (Petra) - Jordan University Hospi-

tal on Tuesday awarded a JD2 million contract

to two local firms to build a national centre for

the treatment of diabetes and hereditary dis-

Nearly 25 per cent of the Jordanian popula-

tion above the age of 25 suffers from diabetes,

according to Minister of Health Nael Ajlouni

who signed the contract with the general man-

agers of Hussein Miqdadi and Partners and

early next month and will be completed in 540

Stage I will cost JD L38 million and entails

the construction of part of the premises (base-

ment, ground, first and second floors, utilities

hall, specialists clinics, laboratories, X-ray units

and a multi-purpose meeting hall) on 6,500-

He said the JD350,000 second phase entails

Donations from various private sector institu-

the installation of the electromechanical work.

tions, charitable societies, the University of Jor-

dun, the Higher Council for Science and Tech-

nology and private individulas will help pay for

The non-profit centre will be governed by a

board of trustees representing the Ministry of

Health, the Royal Medical Services of the Jor-

dan Armed Forces, the Jordanian Diabetes

Society, the University of Jordan and the private

He said the centre will also serve as an

umbrella for the different sectors that offer ser-

vices to diabetic patients and will conduct

the construction.

sector, the minister said.

By Rana Awwad

AMMAN -- Over 200 ter-

minally ill patients have

received pulliative care from

Al-Malath Foundation For

Humanistic Care. Jordan's

sole organisation operating in

The non-governmental

election of eight and some 20 volunteers.

offers physical, psychologi-

cal and spiritual care to case

this field.

square-metres of land, the minister said.

Ajlouni said the two-stage project is to start

Khaled Maraga Establishment.

Bank in Bangladesh is a "shining

in the world today."

leader.

a Royal Court statement said.

Queen Noor receives Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at

Queen receives Bangladeshi PM, wives

of UAE emir and Bahraini crown prince

example" and pioneer of micro-

enterprise for women and that

women, particularly in Jordan,

have played a pivotal role in "pro-

viding a safety net for all genera-

Attending the meeting were

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister

Abdus Samad Azad. Minister of

Civil Aviation and Tourism Mosharraf Hussein, the ambes-

sador of Bangladesh and members

of the accompanying delegation.

Zahran Palace Her Highness

Sheikha Famma Bint Mubarak,

the wife of Emir Sheikh Zayed of

the United Arab Emirates, his

daughter Her Highness Sheikha

Shama Bint Zeid, and wife of the

Crown Prince of Bahrain Her

Highness Princess Sabieika as

well as members of the accompa-

nying delegations from the UAE

Attending with the Queen were

Their Royal Highnesses Princess

Earlier. Queen Noor received at

by February 17, 16

h WB official

A ## A ## s Orcassian delegato.

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Arabas for North 26

the suffering of patients and their families at a point where cure is no longer an option. The six-year old society. whose name in Arabic means i refuge, said its free services are offered around-the-clock to whoever knocks at its doors in Amman, its only

area of operation. "We care for the soul and the body," said Rana Hammad, director of the foundation. "Pulliative care provides that kind of human to human

treatment, which tries to alleviate the complex mixture of physical and the resulting spiritual pain of a dying patient," she explained during a recent interview with the

Jordan Times. "It neither precipitates or prolongs death but responds to the patient's last earthly needs and wishes in an attempt to make his remaining life as comfortable, painfree and satisfactory as possi-

She stressed that palliative care views family as a vital part of the care unit. Hence, Al-Malath services extend to caregivers who need a great deal of support in dealing with and accepting the idea

of a dying relative. "A follow-up service continues in and after bereavement up to one year in some cases," said Hammad, who holds a post graduate degree

Palliative care had its roots in the hospice movement which emerged in response to the abstract scientific approach versus the curative and care model it called for, doctors said.

Palliative care holistic approach to alleviate suffering

Established in 1993 to treat the progressive number of the incurable cancer cases, Jordan was the first to introduce the palliative approach in the Mediterranean Eastern

Statistics supplied by the Jordan Cancer Registry in 1996 put the rate of all cancer patients among Jordanians at 74.3 cases per 100.000 people compared to a 300 per 100,000 ratio in the United

According to the National Cancer Control Committee, a cancer patient does not only experience physical pain.

"Other psycho-related factors seems to contribute to increase suffering. These include depression, anxiety, anger, fear, restlessness, helplessness and desperation," it

Hammed stressed the importance of the mind-body relationship among terminally-ill patients.

"The patient's psychological situation is highly reflected in his health situation. That is why our team studies and provides holistic aid to the patient taking all these factors into consideration," she said.

Nurses, physicians, social workers and the director each look at a certain aspect of the patient according to his field of specialisation. A full plan is then set by all parties to provide the right kind of care.

Al Malath prefers a homebound setting for patients as the core of its philosophy focuses on the quality, not the quantity of the patient's last

"It transfers hospital to home, not the other way round. And apart from offering sedatives, antifungals. opioids, and any other necessary pain control drug, the centre also provides hospital beds, alternating pressure pads and other services,"

Entertainment activities, including birthdays, trips and social gatherings, could also be a key part in keeping the patient's morale quite high, Hammad said

Hammad said.

"Such functions are seen as helpful means in making the patient feel an active, beloved person and enjoying life to the full," she stressed.

Hammad said the society had plans to expand its services to other areas in Jordan. However, due to a financial crunch, the centre might ask new patients to shoulder some of the expenses of their

JPA slams decision to suspend weekly

'We were always worried that our democratic march would be hurt by... the harsh implementation of illogical

articles in this [Press and Publications] Law' — JPA

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN - The Jordan Press Association (JPA) Tuesday slammed a recent court decision to suspend the publication of a weekly while its editor stands trial on charges of publishing false and insulting stories.

JPA urged the government to introduce changes to the much-opposed 1998 Press and Publications Law to eliminate such articles that allow for closures of newspapers during an

ongoing trial. Fahed Rimawi, the editor of Al Majd weekly, is charged with "slandering the Royal family, publishing false information about the prime minister and members of the government and attacks on the

security service." "We were always worried that our democratic march would be hurt by negative reactions to and the harsh implementation of illogical articles in this law," the JPA said in a statement issued

after a board meeting. "What we feared and did not want to happen has now taken place," it said. And even though we remain fully confident in the justice of the Jordanian

'Jordan conforms to WHO minimum

Areas most attractive to rats and

insects are ponds, garbage dumps,

sewage drains and other areas

where unsanitary conditions are

immediate action once it receives a

complaint from any citizen who

finds a rodent in the house, or sus-

pects their presence inside or out-

the given address," Abbadi said.

"And our follow-up services con-

tinue until the place is proven

Abbadi said the department

functions as the main umbrella for

20 offices scattered across its areas

of operation in the Greater Amman

information about potential loca-

tions and our highly-trained staff meet the demands," he said.

During summer, or what Abbadi

refers to as the "season of abun-

dance" because the population of

rats and other insects swells dra-

matically, "our teams work until

Abbadi said the department still

uses conventional methods to fight

rodents and other insects such as

spraying destructive annihilates

and laying traps which rely on anti-

coagulants mixed with food items,

causing death within 24 to 48

mid-night."

These offices provide us with

"Within hours, our teams head to

side his or her residence.

The department boasts of taking

recommended rat percentages'

known to prevail.

legal system, such a harsh law and such extreme articles certainly do not serve the interests of Jordan and its international stature."

added the association. Rimawi was detained on Feb. 4 and released on bail on Feb. 6. The paper said it had been banned from publishing until the trial is over, but no date for the proceedings has yet been

Reporters Sans Frontières, an independent organisation for the defence of press freedoms worldwide. protested at the suspension of the newspaper under the provisions of the new press law ratified on Sept. 1,

Paris-based

Reporters Sans Frontières urged Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh in a letter to use his influence to allow the weekly to resume publica-

1998.

According to Rimawi the paper could be closed for as long as one year until the case ends.

"Al Majd was only exercising its right to freedom of speech, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has been ratified by Jordan," said the organisation in the letter.

However, Abbadi declined to say

Head of the Rodents Department

Alla Rahahleh said his office is

focusing on a new strategy to fight

rat and insects through spreading

popular awareness on ways to fight

such animals while preserving the

great air pollution and we are very

keen to preserve the environment.

not harm it,"he said. "Our strategy

now aims to acquaint the public

with means of eliminating dirty

places that are considered fertile

living areas for rats. Once this step

is in full force, we will be able to

Rats are vertebrates which repro-

duce at a very high rate. In normal

conditions, a female rat conceives

six times a year with eight to 12

babies each time. They become

sexually mature at the age of only

These mammals, are also high

food-consumers. A rat consumes

one-tenth of its own weight each

meal, which explains the large bait

Rats, disliked by most for their

appearance, are often feared as

they cause bacterial, viral and other

fatal diseases to mankind,

although, according to Abadi, none

of these diseases have been report-

eradicate the issue."

one and a half months.

used to exterminate them.

ed in the Kingdom.

"Destructive annihilates cause

environment.

how much money is spent annual-

ly to control rodents and insects.

Temporary shut-off of water from Israel 'routine'

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN - The government Tuesday denied news reports that Israel will stop pumping water to Jordan to fend off a drought in the Jewish state, saying that the Kingdom requested a temporary shut off to guarantee its own supplies.
"The 1994 Jordanian-

Israeli peace treaty is clear. and it has nothing to do with a drought in Israel," Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Dureid Mahasneh told the Jordan

Mahasneh's deputy Thafer Alem yesterday told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the authority had asked Israel to stop pumping water from the Yarmouk River and Lake Tiberias to Jordan as of the end of January until the beginning of March in order to save supplies for this summer.

Alem said the "routine shut-off" is usually conducted during this time of the year to save water.

He added that the Kingdom obtains water from the two sources according to a programme, which can be changed in line with the country's

water needs. Several months ago, Israel assured Jordan that it is committed to the peace treaty, refuting recent statements by its Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan that it should reconsider the water agreement signed

"Israel will stand by all

its commitments in the

with the Kingdom.

peace accord with Jordan and shall continue cooperation with the Kingdom on various issues, including water, as outlined in the agreement between the two countries," Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon said then in an official clarification after Jordan protested Eitan's statement "If a need arises to examine the outcome of water shortages that our area might face, Israel shall do it together in consultation and coopera-

tion with Jordan." According to Annex II of the peace treaty Israel extracts 12 million cubic metres of water in summer — May 15 to Oct. 15 of each year — and Jordan extracts the rest of the Yarmouk's flow.

In winter - Oct. 16 to May 14 - Israel pumps out 13 mcm, and Jordan concedes to Israel pumping an additional 20 mcm from

the river. Last year, the two countries began construction of a JD1.65 million diversion dam to more effectively utilise 40 million cubic metres of the Yarmouk's overflow per year and regulate year-round inflow of water to the 110-kilometrelong King Abdullah Canal.

In return for the additional water that Jordan grants to Israel in winter, Israel agrees to transfer 20 mcm to the Kingdom from the Jordan River directly upstream from Deganva gates on the river in sum-

Also in accordance with the treaty, the Kingdom is currently storing winter water in Lake Tiberias which it reclaims in the summer, supplying 60-80

For the purpose of the implementation of this annex, the two sides have established a joint water committee comprised of three members from each

First women's shelter to open within few months

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — Jordan will open its first women's shelter within the next few months to look after women who are subjected to domestic violence and whose lives are threatened by their families for "reasons of honour," Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamser said

Tuesday. The ministry has rented a building in Shmeisani, and is working on supporting it with the necessary equipment and staff to run it," the minister told the Jor-

dan Times. More than 60 women are forced to spend indefinite terms in the country's correctional facilities under what is termed as "administrative detention or proective custody, according to prison records. Many women are kept in prison without any

Human rights activists have continuously called on the govemment to guarantee the security and freedom of these women, as many are locked in prison indefinitely, while others face the risk of being killed once they are

released from prison. Between 25 to 30 women are killed annually by their family members in Jordan for honour reasons, according to police sta-

Although many sociologist and human rights activists believe a shelter is not a final solution. especially for women who are under threat by their families, Director of the Social Defence Department at the Ministry of Social Development Musa Safi, who will be in charge of the shelter, says the aim is "to separate women who are in prison for pro-

tective custody from the rest of the inmates." "The shelter aims at providing safety, housing, rehabilitation and legal, social and psycological help for abused women and ones who are threatened by their families" Safi said, adding that "their cases are considered a social problem and it differs from that of

the rest of women who a

rectional facilities." The building will be able to house between 40 to 50 women over the age of 18 when it is fully furnished and equipped, he

He said the ministry is cooperating with the Family Protection Unit, affiliated with the Public Security Department, and recently opened an office to enable social service experts working at the unit to give support to the victims and their families.

"We will accept the women based on the recommendation of the social workers at the unit or by court or administrative orders," he

explained. The Family Protection Unit, which opened in September 1997, deals monthly with cases of sexual offences against women and minors as well as child abuse.

He added that the ministry has contacted several government and non-governmental organisations in order to form a committee headed by Marnser to draft the shelter's by-laws and technical proceduers and to work on fund raising in order to expand the shelter into a national service.

The organisations expected to participate in the committee include representatives from the ministries of Social development, health and labour as well as re resentatives from the Public Security Department, the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the General Federation for Jordanian Women, the Jordanian Women's Union, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women

This is a small project, but we are hoping that it will become a national project with the help and support of all," he concluded.

Announcement



Imperial Travel & Tourism Co.

announces its appointment as the general sales agents for



in Jordan as of February 16,1999.

At the following address:

Shmeisani, Abdul Hamid Shouman Str. Fanous Centre Bldg. 1st floor Tel.: 5664871/2/3

Fax: 5664870

Russians ease their opposition to security annex of peace plan

RAMBOUILLET, France (AP) - With four days left to cut a deal at the Kosovo peace talks. Serb negotiators appear to have backed down on most of their demands except forbidding NATO troops on Yugoslav territory, but they seem to have lost Russian support on the issue.

Russia, which has backed Serbia in its opposition to foreign troops, now has apparently turned its back on Belgrade. While on Belgrade. Moscow may not approve a NATO force, it at least will not block it, diplomatic sources said Tuesday.

Under heavy pressure from the United States and five European nations to sign an American-sponsored political settlement by noon Saturday, Serb President Milutinovic said Monday he is willing to give Kosovo's ethnic Albanians wide-ranging self-rule.

However, he said he can't compromise on NATO occupation to help enforce any agreement.

"We don't think that the troops are needed if the agreement is good and acceptable to the majority of people living in Kosovo," Milutinovic said. adding that abandoning NATO demands for a peacekeeping force was a 'precondition' for any eventual peace settlement.

A diplomatic source, speaking Tuesday on condition of anonymity, said reports from the weekend meeting of the Contact the United Group] Russia, France. Britain, Germany and Italy - "were encouraging. The Russians will not block the military annex" to the Slobodan Milosevic will have no choice but to back down or risk NATO air strikes.

The Contact Group is Serb-led pushing Yugoslavia to grant autonomy to the ethnic Albanian majority of Kosovo. More than 2.000 people have been killed in fighting in the southern Yugoslav province over the past

The Americans say any Kosovo settlement must be guaranteed by a NATO force. The alliance is completing plans to dispatch as many as 30,000 troops to Kosovo, including up to 4,000 Americans.

Russia, another one of the outside countries overseeing the talks, is pushing just as hard for a resolution by Saturday. But Moscow

opposes NATO air strikes.

Milatinovic said the
Serbians wouldn't be surprised if the Russians change their minds regarding NATO, under Western Apparently, according to the diplomatic source, they have done so. "We can't rule out such a

possibility," Milutinovic The Kosovo Albanians seem ready to sign a threeyear interim agreement and tone down their demands for independence, but they want a NATO presence to

protect them from any

threat by Yugoslav forces. A Kosovo Albanian close to the talks in the 14th century French chateau here said U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright laid out three possibilities for the Albanians: — Kosovo Albanians don't sign and they lose all American sup-

ders with Albania and Macedonia, closes all roads and cuts off supplies to the rebels.

The Albanians sign and the Serbs don't. The United States gives strong support to Kosovo's Albanians and bombs the Serbs. Everybody signs.

polices the agreement. NATO has threatened air strikes against Yugoslavia if !they don't reach an agreement here. The Serbs seem to have been backed into a corner, and have two

options: bad and worse.

NATO enters Kosovo and

First, they could sign the deal and face a public badklash for giving away Kosovo, which is considered the cradle of Serbia. Second, they could not sign the deal and prepare for NATO to unleash its missiles and bombs on Yugoslavia.

For the first time since the Kosovo conference started Feb. 6, Milutinovic indicated the Serbians were willing to give up most of their demands that have stalled the talks.

In an interview with the Associated Press. Milutinovic repeated his objection to foreign troops backing any deal and said NATO bombing, in the absence of an agreement, would amount to "an aggression and a war crime."

Asked whether the proposed NATO deployment was the major sticking point and the rest was negotiable, Milutinovic said: "Yes, that is right." He said any NATO deployment would "badly dam-

port. The United States age our sovereignty." Kosovo peace plan. Congo rebels launch offensive, say Kabila's allies

HARARE (AFP) - Rebels to capture Ghadolite in the and Rwanda - of using in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have launched a major offensive on all fronts, military allies of President Laurent Kabila

Zimbabwe's governmentcontrolled media quoted a countries are fully devoted Development Community (SADC) Task Force Headquarters statement as saying that the rebel offensive was most intense in the north and southeast.

SADC members Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia — along with Chad - have troops in the DRC in support of Kabila. The statement said the rebels had engaged in a

massive recruitment drive weapons of high calibre."

It said their objective was

north. Kamina and Mbujimavi in Katanga province and Lubumbashi in the south before launching an offensive to take the capital Kinshasa.

"While the SADC allied African and committed to the current peace initiatives, they will use all available resources to deny the invaders any chance of a total military victory," the statement said.

"SADC allied forces are currently engaged in battles with the invading troops along the Congo River. notably in the general area of Kabalo and along Lake Tanganyika in Moba," it

The statement accused the "invaders" — meaning rebel-supporters Uganda early December.

current peace negotiations to achieve military gains.

They pretend to talk peace while on the ground they are intensifying the war effort," the statement

Efforts to broker a peace in the DRC have repeatedly collapsed because Kabila and his allies refuse to negotiate directly with rebel leaders, accusing them of being mere puppets of Uganda and Rwanda.

Žambian Frederick Chiluba, who is the chief mediator in the conflict. is still trying to arrange a regional summit for the signing of a ceasefire agreement.

The summit has been postponed four times since it was first scheduled for

Castro defends proposal to expand death penalty

HAVANA (AP) -- Fidel increase Cuba's longest Deputy Raul Suarez, who Castro defended his proposal to expand the use of the death penalty to combat soaring en terms for repeat offenders. crime, saying capital punish- It also would expand the use ment in Cuba would be of the death penalty - now applied only through strict rarely imposed - and the use

legal means. Summary executions by death squads - once common in some parts of Latin America — would never be tolerated in Cuba. Castro told a special session of Cuban The death penalty was comlawmakers Monday.

But changes in the criminal justice system such as making drug trafficking a capital crime and lengthening prison terms for alien smuggling are necessary to save the government, Castro said.

. An affirmative, unanimous vote was expected at the end of the session, expected to continue Tuesday.

prison sentence from 20 years to 30 years, and would lengthof life sentences.

The get-tough legislation comes six weeks after Castro called for harsher sentencing, saying that drug traffickers "deserve capital punishment." mon in the 1960s and 1970s. but has been rare in the past two decades,

During his Jan. 5 speech celebrating the 40th anniversary of the National Revolutionary Police, Castro called Cuba's growing crime problem a threat to the revolu-

Castro noted Monday that the death penalty has oppo-would nents, including Parliament also is a Baptist minister.

"But we are against the death of the country," he said. to applause from lawmakers. "The country has to be saved. That is an absolute priority." In recent weeks, two Cuban men convicted of killing a pair of Italian tourists were sentenced to death. The sentence has automatically been appealed to Cuba's Supreme

Once notably free of street crime and violence, Cuba has seen a surge in prostitution, robbery and theft - even

murder — in recent years. Amid continuing economic crisis brought on by the collapse of the former Soviet bloc, declining state rations have made it hard for many residents to live on state salaries that average \$10 a



photo, urging its people to remain loyal and defend the leader of the Stalinist nation at the risk of their lives. The famine-hit nation, whose economy has been in dire straits for several years, held events across the country to mark Kim's birthday

N. Koreans pledge 'suicidal explosion' for Kim Jong-II

SEOUL (AFP) — Crisis-hit quarters of the revolution head-North Korea has urged its peo-"suicidal explosion" to protect celebrating his 57th birthday this week, analysts said

Weeks of orchestrated celebrations culminated with a ceremony Monday night attended by thousands of senior cadres from North Korea's 1.1-million-strong armed forces, the cabinet and the ruling Worker's Party, a South Korean analyst

"Celebrations were almost over with Monday's ceremony in the April 25 House of Culture. Today, most North Koreans are celebrating Kim's birthday at their homes," he

Kim, born on Feb. 16, 1942. was missing from the celebrations in Pyongyang's April 25 House of Culture, but Premier Hong Song-Nam seized the opportunity to extract a pledge of loyalty to the "Dear Leader."

The premier in his speech carried by North Korea's propaganda machine the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), urged starving North Koreans to defend Kim with their lives and prepare themselves to be heroes through human bomb attacks.

"All the people and the servicemen should consider the slogun 'let us defend the head-

ed by the great comrade Kim ple to sacrifice themselves for a - Jong-II with our lives' to be an eternal creed of struggle and reclusive leader Kim Jong-II life, under which they should prepare themselves to be heroes through human bomb suicidal explosion."

Hong also urged the impoverished country to uphold Kim's leadership with loyalty. "not shaken by any storms."

"In order to defend the Korean-style socialism and carry the revolutionary cause of juche to accomplishment, all the party and the entire people should uphold Kim Jong-Il's politics, ideas and leadership with loyalty and filial piety," he

North Korea has unveiled a voluminous programme of celebrations for Kim's birthday. including a flower show, an international figure-skating competition and a nationwide march to Mountain Packtu where Kim was allegedly born. Streets and villages have been in a festive mood, with fireworks set off above Paektu, said expens who have monitored North Korea's media.

An "evening gala" took place Monday, with army generals dancing together with soldiers, said KCNA monitored in

of the country and people and the symbol of victory," it said. The festivities, however, have been overshadowed by reports of widespread famine and speculation that the Stalinist country is on the road

Some U.S. sources have said that up to 10 per cent of North Korea's population of around 24 million have died as a result of famine and starvation over the past three years.

South Korean intelligence officials claimed the North had spent more than \$100 million on celebrations, enough cash to feed thousands of people. North Korea could not feed

its population, officials were buying rice, sugar and household electronic appliances abroad to be given to party officials in Kim's name, they said. Kim Jong-II, son of North Korea's founding father Kim Il-Sung, was confirmed as the country's top leader last September when he was reappointed as head of the powerful National Defence Commission.

It took four years for him to complete the first Communist dynastic succession. He has for decades been a

silent figure in the shadows of his father's dominant political Students and young people held a separate rally praising Kim as the "destiny and future" legacy, with the few reliab details about his life drowned out by propaganda or myth. legacy, with the few reliable details about his life drowned

Group protests fat-bashing ads used by popular fitness chain

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - If those things. How dare an adspace aliens land on Earth, would they demand "Take me to your leader" or "Take me to your eater"? That's the question behind a billboard ad campaign by 34 Hour Fitness which depicts a hungry space alien with the caption; "When they come, they will eat the fat ones

That month-old slogan has infuriated more than 30 "fat rebels" who came out Monday to protest the ad and the anti-fat ethos they say is prevalent in many gyms.

"It's really hard for fat people. to get into the gym anyway. To alienate them before they even walk in the door is cruel." said Rebekah Bridges, who handed out follipops to passers-

man decide for society that we're not allowed to be someplace," Ms. Bridges said. She was joined on the sidewalk by several other larger women and men who chanted

"Eat me!" A fitness trainer for the rival World Gym even ran an impromptu aerobics session during the sidewalk protest. leading four participants through a rigorous high-kneed.

arm-pumping routine. Others waved handwritten signs that read "Fat and Fit" and "Honk If You're Fat," which received loud support from traffic on the busy downtown

Company officials say they didn't intend to offend anyone. "Sometimes humour helps "I may be fat, but I'm fit, I'm make things easier, and can happy, I'm sexual. I'm all of even be motivational." 24 Hour

Carlsbad-based 24 Hour Fitness has 284 gyms in 10 Western states. Europe and

Marilyn Wann, who organised the protest, said the company's ad isn't funny, and took her "fat rebels" to the front lines to be seen and heard, "We've got an epidemic of

eating disorders, an epidemic of exercise disorders, people who have to work out twice a day or they're not worthy human beings," Ms. Wann said, Bob Jancula, a club member

for 12 years who works out twice a week, said the ad was heavy-handed. "I thought the ad was very inappropriate. It was stupid," he said.

Ms. Wann said she'd like to see the company retract the ads and work with fat advocates to fill out its membership.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Romanian miners' protest revived

PETROSANI. Romania (AFP) - A protest by Romanian miners which shook the Romanian government last month was revived Tuesday as hundreds of pitmen headed for Bucharest after their leader. Miron Cozma, was handed a jail sentence. An AFP reporter saw a first group of 300 miners leaving the Jiu Valley, a key coal-producing region, aboard a convoy of buses. Several hundred others were waiting for transport. On Monday, Romania's supreme court handed down an 18year term to firebrand miners' leader Miron Cozma over a 1991 march on Bucharest which brought down the government. Last month Cozma led an aborted march on the Romanian capital from Jan. 18-22, which only ended after he held personal negotiations with Premier Radu Vasile on demands over pay and pit closure plans.

Four cars explode outside Uzbekistan government building

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (AP) — Four cars exploded almost simultaneously Tuesday following a shootout in front of Uzbekistan's government headquarters. Police and witnesses said at least seven people were killed. A fifth explosion went off later in the lobby of the government building, witnesses added. The violence erupted before a cabinet session was to begin, but no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. The trouble began when a car broke through a cordon in front of the government building in the capital Tashkent, prompting security guards to open fire. A shootout ensued, and two attackers were killed, said a policeman, who declined to give his name. The car then exploded, and three more cars nearby also exploded, all within a minute of the original blast. Afterward, witnesses said they saw the bodies of seven people that were killed — the two assailants and five civilians. One person was detained, the policeman added. 'By all appearances it was a terrorist act because the cars all blew up at the same time." the Emergency Situations Committee said in a statement. Uzbekistan's authoritarian President Islam Karimov rushed to the scene following the blasts. Karimov has cracked down on political opponents and has drawn criticism from international human rights groups. There has been sporadic unrest in Uzbekistan in recent years, but Karimov is considered to have a firm grip on

Prosecution uproar as indictment in eco-journalist trial leaked

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AFP) — Military prosecutors were up in arms Tuesday after an eight-page indictment of Russian naval journalist Grigory Pasko, on trial here for treason, was leaked to the press. Pasko, 34, was arrested in November 1997 and accused by Russian security agents of "high treason" handing over military secrets to Japan. His trial is closed to the public and the indictment, which includes a list of military personnel who plan to testify for the defence and a detailed account of the court case, is guarded as secret. Prosecutors have pinpointed the leak to the Russian human-rights watchdog group called the Glasnost Defence Foundation. A foundation spokesman in Moscow said his group received the indictment by a masscirculated e-mail datelined Vladivostok and could not identify the original sources of the leak, "I don't know who sent out the indictment." said the foundation's managing director Oleg Pantilov, "Whoever did, it should not hurt P because everyone can now see how weak their case really is." Pasko, an investigative journalist who also worked for the Pacific Fleet's newspaper, exposed illegal dumping of chemical and liquid radioactive waste by the fleet in the Sea of Japan. The video footage was handed over to Japan's NHK television, where it was featured in a report about ecological crimes committed by the Russian military. The journalist's case has received international attention, with Amnesty International declaring Pasko a prisoner of conscience. He faces up to 20 years in jail if convicted. Pasko's lawyers have dismissed the evidence against their client. saying the information was already in the public domain and that the FSB investigation was biased.

Indian court slaps contempt notices on air traffic controllers

NEW DELHI (AFP) -- An Indian court slapped contempt notices on striking air traffic controllers Tuesday for violating a court order by "harassing" domestic and international passengers. The Delhi high court said in its order that it had directed the controllers (ATCs) three years ago to take the court "into confidence" before going on a strike. Judge Dalveer Bhandari said the court had also formed a threemember panel to look into the pay increases. 'Despite all these, the atcs have resorted to agitational path when the matter is still pending in court ... deliberate delay of flights has caused difficulties to passengers and prima facie the passengers are harassed." Bhandari said. He told the air traffic controllers guild "not to take any step causing disruption of flights. It is also restrained from adopting the go-slow programme at all the airports, including five international airports." Monday the government deployed military personnel across Indian airports to regulate traffic following a twoweek "go slow" by ATCs demanding higher wages on a par with pilots. The controllers have threatened an all-out strike if any member was "victimised." The action by the controllers has led to major delays of domestic and international flights. Several rounds of talks with the government have failed to break the ice. The controllers' guild has denied responsibility for the delays, blaming a new navigational system at the New Delhi airport instead. A guild spokesman said the failure of the new system, equipment and procedures were causing delays in New Delhi which sparked off a chain reaction elsewhere.

U.S. marine gets 20 months in prison for hit-and-run

TOKYO (AP) -- A Japanese court sentenced a U.S. marine to 20 months in prison Tuesday for the fatal hit-and-run last year of a teenager on the southern island of Okinawa. Marine Cpl. Randall M. Eskridge, 23. of LaPorte. Indiana, had pleaded guilty to the Oct. 7 accident, when the car he was driving struck the small motorcycle that 18-year-old Yuki Uema was riding. Eskridge fled the scene. Uema died of head injuries a week later at a hospital. The prosecution had asked for a 30-month sentence for Eskridge, who was charged with hit-and-run, death through professional negligence and drunken driving. The court decided to put Eskridge in prison for a year and eight months, said Osamu Shimada, a spokesman for Naha District Court. Okinawans have long resented having most of the 47,000 American troops in Japan stationed on their tiny island, 1.6(x) kilometres southwest of Tokyo. Under Japanese law, a conviction on injuring someone while driving carries a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison or a 500,000 yen (\$4,310) fine.

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THE ZE TO SE

are Inuit, and the new government is expected to be the first in Canada - except for tribal councils — controlled by an aboriginal peo-A total of 71 candidates

competed for 19 seats in the legislature of Nunavut.

Territories (AP) — Decades

of dreams and hard-nosed

negotiations came close to

realisation as voters in the

eastern Arctic chose the first

government of Nunavut, a

new territory to be created

Across a frigid region big-

ger than Alaska, residents in

some of Canada's most

villages voted

April 1.

Monday.

Some of the victors were already calling for the newly elected legislators to meet within days even though the eastern Arctic territory doesn't split off from the old

and firecrackers banged as mil-

lions of Chinese ushered in the

Lunar New Year across Asia

Tuesday, praying the region

would overcome economic tur-

moil in the Year of the Rabbit.

Beijingers rang in the Year of

the Rabbit at midnight (1600

GMT Monday) with 108

strikes of a giant bronze bell.

while in Shanghai local resi-

dents went wild in a deafening

extravaganza of fireworks

Temples in Taiwan were cov-

ered in a pall of incense smoke

as residents of Taipei flocked to

the city's Hsing Tien Temples

to pray for a better year than the

economically catastrophic Year

Thousands of people packed

Chaotien Temple in Taiwan's

central Peikang town before

the door opened at 12.55 a.m.,

the lucky time for opening of

the temple for the Lunar New

Year according to the Chinese

Recession-hit Hong Kong's

which deafened the city.

of the Tiger just gone.

April 1. It's the first change very high. It's been 25 years to the map of Canada since the entry of Newfoundland in 1949.

purplish blotch, has become the world's first radioactive nature reserve (Reuters photo)

"I'm not going to wait a couple of weeks to get together because I think the political direction has to start now — within days, said Jack Anawak, one of the new legislators.

The new territory has no political parties; the members of the legislature will About 80 per cent of Nunavut's 25,000 people choose the premier and cabinet from among themselves on April 1.

With the upset defeat of Territories Northwest Premier Goo Arlooktoo, Anawak, a twotime Liberal member of Parliament and former intercommissioner of Nunavut, is considered a

front-runner for the post of premier. Five of the new legislators

Northwest Territories legislature. "I think expectations are results posted.

BELIING (AFP) — Bells rang Tai-Sin Temple to pray for alleyways, rooftops and apart-

wealth and health. Wong Tai-

Sin, a Taoist deity believed to

hold the power to grant wishes,

is popular among Hong Kong

people, especially business-

In Beijing, hundreds of rev-

ellers met at the Great Bell

Temple in the northeast of the

city at midnight to witness the

annual ringing of the world's

The number 108 is consid-

ered auspicious as it is a multi-

ple of 12 (the number of

months in the year) and of nine.

traditionally signifying heaven

and the emperor. Eight is the

At the 108th strike, the

crowds greeted each other with

cries of "Gongxi facai" (good

wishes and prosperity). Bursts

of firecrackers sounded in the

distance despite a ban on their

But their compatriots in

Shanghai led China in the noise

stakes, exploding hundreds of

rockets and thousands of

number denoting fortune.

biggest bell in use

in the making and we will not be able to meet everybody's expectations," said Kevin O'Brien, who will be moving from the Northwest Territories legislature to the Nunavut chamber.

A park ranger feeds the aurochs at Polesskiy national park. In 1986 more than 20,000 people were evacuated

from this land within a radius of 30-km of the Chernobyl atomic power plant as it spewed radiation across

Europe in the world's worst nuclear accident. Today, the zone, marked on maps of the country with an ominous

In Canada's far north, voters elect

first government of new territory

Despite the challenges, O'Brien said people are looking forward to running their own show for the first

"This is pretty exciting. It's history. We know that we can make a difference. In the end, the people will be well served with a government that's closer to home."

People gathered throughout Nunavut to watch the election results come in as the polls closed at 8 p.m. in each of the vast territory's three time zones.

One of the biggest gatherings was in Nunavut's capital of Iqalvit on Baffin are members of the current Island, where more than 100 school gym to watch the

An employee at one hospital

said seven people were admit-

ted with fireworks-related

injuries, about the same num-

In Beijing 20 were treated at

one hospital for eve injuries

from mishandled fireworks in

spite of a city-wide ban, the

Tuesday in Shanghai spo-

radic firecracker explosions

echoed around the city during

the day as street-sweepers

struggled to clear up mountains

of burnt red paper and card-

welcomed their Year of the Cat,

equivalent to the Rabbit, with

firecrackers to ward off evil

spirits, returning home to pray

to their ancestors and exchange

presents. Thousands of Hanoi

residents thronged the prome-

nade around Hoan Kiem Lake

at midnight for a New Year

"It's wonderful to have the

And Vietnamese in Hanoi

Beijing Daily reported.

Chinese welcome Year of the Rabbit

ment windows.

ber as in 1998.

board debris.

happy," said Jobie Nutarak, Monday evening became the first member of the territorial legislature to be declared a winner. "It's going to be lots of fun and lots of work.'

"I'm happy, I'm very very

Candidates, who had been campaigning in -20 F (-30 C) temperatures, said voter interest was high.

Anawak said the election should be a positive example for aboriginals elsewhere in Canada and

"This will showcase to the world that we as Inuit can run a public government focusing on our own issues without forgetting others as well," he said.

Nunavut faces serious challenges. One-third of its residents receive welfare. and the unemployment rate is 22 per cent.

people came to a high as a result of land claim negotiations with the Inuit that began in the mid-'70s.

Singapore, which banned

firecrackers in the 1970s for

safety reasons, celebrated with

a government-run fireworks

Clear skies prevailed as rev-

ellers enjoyed cultural perfor-

mances, a carnival, displays of

Chinese arts and crafts, and

Chinese delicacies at a river-

Shops in most Chinese cities

were closed on the first day of

the three-day holiday, New

Year's Day being a time tradi-

tionally set aside for staying at

home with the family, eating

The Year of the Rabbit in

Chinese astrology symbolises

stability and practicality. Those

born under the sign are thought

to be sensitive, prudent and

sociable. They make good

lovers, although they are prone

to infidelity, and are likely to

spend a lot of money on home

improvements and keeping up

display at midnight.

side promenade.

and drinking.

Mahathir to tour Malaysia to counter 'propaganda'

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Minister Prime Mohamad Mahathir announced

Tuesday to begin a nationwide tour to counter what he called propaganda by government opposition, news reports said.

Mahathir said his tour of Malaysia would begin Thursday with a three-day visit to eastern Sabah state ahead of an upcoming state

election. Voter sentiment in Sabah polls is widely seen as the litmus test for Mahathir's ruling coalition. Exact dates have not yet been announced for the state poll or a general election, which must be called before April

2000. Mahathir was quoted by the national Bernama news agency as saying his nationwide tour was needed to clear up confusion caused by "intense propaganda" from government

"I believe the people do not have full information. So I will use the opportunity during my meeting with the people to make clarification. I feel as a politician, it is my duty," Mahathir was quoted as saying.

The 73-year-old leader has faced an unprecedented antigovernment movement since he sacked his popular longtime protégé Anwar Ibrahim in September. Mahathir said Anwar was morally unfit for govern-

ment. Anwar, who is on trial for corruption and illegal sex acts, says the charges against him and his ouster were part of a political vendetta to end his challenge Mahathir's 18-year

rule. Anwar's ouster sparked massive street protests and several new opposition coalitions, all demanding political reform.

Mahathir said that even students abroad had been misled by government opponents believed Malaysia's political problems would be solved if he resigned.

"This is not a matter of my stepping down, and everything will be settled," Mahathir said. "The problem is that we need to work together to stave off the efforts to desta-

bilise our country." Last week, when Mahathir met with Malaysian students in London, one called on the leader to step down because of the Anwar

Mahathir replied to the student: "I will not resign. I will stay here unless somebody shoots me or tries to assassinate me like some people are think-

Indonesia to propose **East Timor join ASEAN** "This is not a deadline.

JAKARTA (AFP) Indonesia will sponsor East Timor as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) if the troubled territory opts for independence, a senior official said here Tuesday.

Dewi Fortuna Anwar, foreign affairs advisor to President B.J. Habibie said it would be "in Indonesia's interests" if the former Portuguese colony joined the regional grouping.

"It is not in our interests if a country in the area is not in tune with the others," Anwar told a journalists' seminar here, adding the "spectre" that a foreign power would establish as base there was a thing of the past.

"There is no real fear any more that a foreign power will have a base in East Timor. This consideration was a concern in 1975. (but) this spectre is no longer relevant." she added.

Moreover, she said: "The influence of a small and poor country will be limited. It is more a country which needs help and assistance, than a country which might dictate."

In 1975, Indonesia, with the tacit blessing of the United States at the time of its debacle in South Vietnam, invaded the former Portuguese colony Marxists where and Communists had considerable influence at the time.

ASEAN now groups nine countries of the region: Burma, Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Singapore, Philippines,

Thailand and Vietnam. Anwar also rejected the idea that eventual independence of East Timor could set a "bad example" for other restless Indonesian provinces, notably Aceh in North Sumatra and Irian

The problem of East Timor has a different histo-

ry. Aceh, Irian Jaya ... we proclaimed independence together. East Timor was a different case, a colonial backwater, totally useless, they joined us 30 years

"There is no risk of a spillover," she added, making no reference to the fact that Irian Jaya, which shares a land border with independent Papua New Guinea, did not join Indonesia until the 1960s.

Separatist groups are both active in Aceh and Irian

Considered close to Habibie, Anwar is believed to have been party to Jakarta's abrupt January 27 about-face on the question of East Timor, which Indonesia annexed a year after the 1975 invasion.

Foreign Indonesian Minister Ali Alatas meanwhile said Habibie's announcement last week he wanted to see a free East Timor by Jan. 1 was not a

will no longer be hampered by the question of a settlement on East Timor. We do not want to be burdened by the problem of East Timor as of Jan. 1. 2000," Habibie said last

but a hope that starting in

the year 2000, we would be

freed of the burden of a set-

tlement of the problem of

East Timor," Alatas said

according to the Antara

He called the date a "peg"

for a time where Indonesia

news agency.

Alatas also said Lisbon, which is still regarded by the United Nations and most states as the official administrator of East Timor, would abide by the decision of the people of East Timor — whether they chose independence or autonomy under

Indonesian flag.
The broad autonomy package is currently being finalised between Indonesia and Portugal in talks held under U.N. auspices.

"There are still one or two matters that need further negotiations and the plan is (the next talks) will be held on next March 9 and 10." Alatas said, adding the package was expected to be completed by April.

The government said last month it would suggest to the new legislature to be formed following elections in June that it let go of East Timor if the autonomy package was rejected by the people of East Timor.

Alatas said a mechanism to determine whether the scheme was accepted or rejected by the people of East Timor will still have to be discussed with the U.N. and Portugal, but again ruled out a referendum.

"We will still have to come forward again to discuss this matter, because, a referendum to decide whether it (the autonomy) is accepted or rejected, is not the best way," he said.

Indonesian opposition leader blames Suharto for bloodshed

INDONESIAN OPPOSITION leader Amien Rais charged here Tuesday that former President Suharto's "pyramid of power" was intact and blamed the fallen leader's clique for the bloody riots plaguing the country.

In a blistering attack on the establishment, Rais, founder of the National Mandate Party (PAN) and a presidential hopeful, also called Suharto's successor, President B.J. Habibie, the former president's "shadow."

"Habibie is the shadow of Suharto, the attorney-general is his spokesman and the

chief of the army is loyal to Suharto," he told a seminar here. "Bloodshed is everywhere from Merauke to Sabang. What is the goal of those who

are behind it?," he said. He said as a result of the confusion some military leaders hoped the people will "sub-

mit to the military." Speaking to a forum of Asian and German journalists here, the moderate

Muslim reformist gave possible motives for the violence: "To distract the attention from Mr. Suharto and his family, to cancel the elections to lengthen the status quo and protect their interests."

This would, he said, create "a political and social disaster" through which the military hoped to strengthen their role.

"The bloody incidents will not derail the process of reform. The military, the most significant power holders, must talk with us," said Rais, who has in the past blamed those close to Suharto for the bloodshed in recent months.

Rais' party, along with that of Megawati Sukamoputri, the popular politician daughter of former president Sukarno, appear to be among the front runners in general elections promised by Habibie for June 7.

Both have been nominated by their parties as candidates for the next presidency, a post Habibie has indicated he might run for if chosen by the ruling Golkar party and which should be filled in November.

Ex-finance minister named joint candidate in

Nigerian elections ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Former Finance Minister Olu Falae was named the ioint presidential nominee for two of Nigeria's three political parties Tuesday. setting him against a retired general in the

upcoming elections. Officials with the All Peoples Party and the Alliance for Democracy agreed early Tuesday morning on a joint candidacy for Falae, following weeks of political and legal wrangling over such a plan.

The 60-year-old former government official will face retired Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo — the candidate of Nigeria's leading party, the Peoples Democratic Party — in the Feb. 27 presidential

Despite the backing of two parties, Falae still has a difficult campaign to overcome the political power and financial backing of Obasanjo and his

The linkage of the AD and the APP is surprising at first glance, because

the Alliance for Democracy is largely composed of Yorubas from Nigeria's southwest and is led by a number of prominent opponents of the country's late dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha. The All Peoples Party, meanwhile, includes many politicians who built their careers through loyalty to

But the presidential parties and candidates have shown little in the way of ideology so far, with candidates offering little

more than vague promises of a better Nigeria as they manoeuvre for greater ethnic and regional sup-

Falae, a Yoruba who had earlier been named the candidate of the Alliance for Democracy, is seen as a temperate politician who could gain support outside of the southwest. Obasanjo is also a

Yoruba, but in a country split along regional, ethnic and religious lines, he is also an anomaly. While he is a Baptist, he

draws most of his support from the predominantly Muslim north, where the military is popular. Obasanjo is well-known

for being the only Nigerian ruler to ever give up power voluntarily. He was jailed from 1995 until June last year by Abacha for alleged involvement in a coup plot.

But his military past is exactly why he is widely distrusted in his home region in the south, where opposition to successive military governments has been strong.

Battered by corruption

and poverty after years of military rule, Nigeria the world's sixth-largest oil producer — has been moving toward civilian democracy Abacha's death in June.

His successor, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, has vowed repeatedly to hand power over to civilians in May. Nigeria has been ruled by the military for all but 10 years since independence Britain in 1960.

Taoist faithful flocked to Wong strings of red firecrackers from fireworks again," said Duong. Antarctic toothfish stocks mysteriously plummet

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) -About 90 per cent of the highly prized Antarctic toothfish have mysteriously vanished from around Australia's Macquarie Island in the last year, baffling scientists and alarming environ-

Toothfish stocks were estimated at more than 35,000 metric tonnes in 1997, when measurement and tracking began, but plummeted to about 2,220 tonnes in 1998. Australian Management Fisherics Authority spokeswoman Trysh

Stone said Tuesday. The decline can't accountably be explained by the take of the legal fishing industry," she said, and the area has apparently been free of the poaching ships plundering other Antarctic oceans campaigner Darren Authority and the Australian the gap in the numbers.

The huge decline in numbers may have been related to shifts in ocean currents or climate effects, Stone said, but she said there is no explanation so far.

A meeting in Hobart of Australian government scientists studying Antarctic fisheries Monday first reported the massive drop in the population around Macquarie Island, about 1,500 km southeast of Hobart

The environmental group Greenpeace called for the area to be closed to toothfish fishing.

"At this stage it is thought that the stocks may have been fished out or that the fish may have moved on to somewhere else. but that is unlikely so it's a mystery at the moment." Greenneace Fisheries

Gladman said.

fireworks display.

"If the small Macquarie Island fishery cannot be managed properly, what hope is there for toothfish in the rest of the Southern Ocean," Gladman added.

Popular in Japan and the United States for its white oily flesh, toothfish is so valuable in the fishing industry that it is known as "white gold."

ships, according to Greenpeace. But Keith Sainsbury, who

Pirate fishing in waters off Antarctica is rampant with up to 90 per cent of the total toothfish catch in some areas taken by illegal and unregulated fishing

chairs the group of scientists from the Australian federal science agency, the Australian Management

Greenpeace had misinterpreted the data and reached an invalid conclusion.

"We are very concerned that the toothfish be monitored and protected, but speculation of this type clouds the issue and is really not helpful," Sainsbury said. Scientists had gone out once in 1997 and again last year and found far fewer fish.

"But that doesn't mean that 90 per cent of the fish have been fished out, it just means that we didn't find them" he said.

"Anyone who has ever owned a fishing rod knows how that goes." Sainsbury said only 800 metric tonnes had been taken from the area by legal fishing. which did not start to account for

Dr. James J. Zogby

Jordan Times

An independent Arab printeral daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975 وومن فابعز بوسبة عربهة سيلسية مستقلة تعسير بالانعليزية عن المؤسسة العسعفية الاردمية

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Time for measured action

NOW THAT Ankara has finally captured its most wanted enemy, PKK leader Abdullab Ocalan, the myriad of political, ethical and legal questions raised by the whole affair should be examined in a rational manner that would contribute to an end to Turkey's most daunting cri-

On the moral front, the public opinion in many European countries sympathises with the Kurdish people and their guerrilla leader, and his organisation's fight for the Kurds' right to self-determination and independence. On the other hand, it is undeniable that Ocalan is a terrorist at the head of an organisation responsible for the killing of thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children.

And there can be no extenuating circumstances: Terrorism can never be justified. Having said that, let us look at the second pro-

tagonist in the affair: Turkey.

Many European human rights organisations have accused Turkish governments of systematic persecution of the Kurds, while politicians and the general public alike have criticised Ankara's conduct and management of the Ocalan crisis as irrespectful of human rights and international legality.

Turkey's last move in the unfolding of the affair, while Ocalan was running from one country to another in search of asylum, was to send a squad of agents to apprehend him. A sense of deep pride was obvious in Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's announcement that his government had kept its word that it would "get him wherever he was hiding in the world." However, "undercover operations" such as the one that secured to Turkey its enemy have been ruled illegal on many occasions by international courts, on the grounds that they violate the principles of domestic jurisdiction and territorial sovereignty.

Turkey can now do what it sees fit with Ocalan. Most likely, it will try and execute him. But the Turkish government should think seriously about the impact that its handling of the Ocalan case might have on Europe and the world at large.

Ankara could transform the arrest of Ocalan from a short-term victory to a long-term investment in its own stability and prosperity. The Turkish government now has the opportunity to engage the rebel leader in a serious dialogue to try and put an end to a conflict which has so far claimed the lives of more than 30,000 people on both sides. By doing that and ending the crisis. Turkey could remove the hurdle that for a longtime hindered its quest to become part of Еигоре.

But, turning Ocalan into a martyr for Kurds all over the world will only add fuel to the fire that has been raging in southern Turkey for a

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said the current government has not yet had a chance as the death of His Majesty King Hussein imposed a kind of general paralysis on Jordan. Although Prince Hassan was responsible for leading the Kingdom, King Hussein's statements about a "comprehensive review and changes in the country's march," made every party here stand still, Masarweh said. Jordan is committed to King Hussein's last wish of a comprehensive review, and it was natural that King Abdullah renewed his confidence in the government until the country overcomes King Hussein's passing and the mourning period ends, he added. Any coming national programme must be studied deeply before a government reshuffle can occur. Masarweh concluded.

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket commented on His Majesty King Abdullah's decision to renew his confidence in Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh's government. Saket said that with this announcement, the issue of carrying out changes in the current government will be postponed, giving it the confidence that should reactivate its role, which recently has been the subject of some speculation. The decision came to prevent any weakness to the executive power, the writer said and added that the move also makes time for new directives to be set and future plans to be explored in a new era. Too much has been said about possible early parliamentary elections and the comprehensive review, he said. However, said Saket, all that needs time to be studied and debated carefully.

Washington Watch

Is the Clinton trial over?

WHEN THE votes were finally taken, the Senate did not convict President Clinton and remove him from office. The trial was over, but no one declared victory. No one celebrated because everyone lost.

Months of humiliation have left the nation embarrassed. Months of partisan bickering and posturing have left the nation exhausted. And months of a pointless trial have left many simply bored and alienated.

It was pointless, because for months now it has been clear that the Senate could not muster the votes needed to convict the president. The impeachment case was too weak and too partisan. The charges were simply too insubstantial to meet the requirements

The longer the trial went on, the more pathetic it became. The hard line prosecutors picked by the House of Representatives to present their case before the Senate were, at one point, reduced to whining. Please don't dismiss this" they urged, "please give us the chance to bring witnesses before you," they pleaded. And, in the end, "please don't embarrass us by voting against our case." Time and again, the Republican leadership in the Senate gave their colleagues, the Republican House prosecutors, the opportunities they requested. All the while, it was clear that the case could not suc-

In the last few days, pundits also under investigation. A federal

began to strategize an "end game" - how the Republicans could gracefully exit from this prolonged agony. But there was no graceful exit. The only end was to vote to acquit the president and move on. And so they did.

While the trial in the Senate is over, the final chapter in this sordid affair has not been written. The Independent Prosecutor Ken Starr, whose personal crusade against the President brought the impeachment charges Congress, is still planning the next phase of his work.

Starr, according to several reports, is continuing his work on several fronts. He may yet indict the president on criminal charges and seek to try him in court, either before or after Clinton leaves

Similarly, Starr is continuing to press ahead with efforts to prosecute a number of individuals who were only peripherally involved in the many investigations against the President,

Starr already has a number of trials of Clinton associates pending and, according to a recent Senate report, the Independent Prosecutor may even begin a new investigation to see whether or not the White House has "taped" Oval Office conversations that the president had with his staff.

But while Ken Starr continues his seemingly unending efforts to end Clinton's presidency, he is court is examining whether or not Starr and his associates have illegally leaked information to the press in an effort to embarrass the

The Attorney General (AG), the Administration official to whom Starr is ultimately responsible, is also reportedly investigating whether or not Starr is guilty of "acting improperly" in an effort to coerce Monica Lewinsky to turn against the President and whether or not Start had inappropriate contact with Paula Jones' attorneys. If this is true then the AG may find that Starr lied when he claimed that he "had no contact with [Jones'] attorneys." So while Start plods on with his \$50 million campaign against the president. the Clinton Administration must now decide whether they have enough evidence of Starr's misdeeds and enough public political support to remove Starr from his

The fallout of the impeachment saga will be felt elsewhere. The hardline right wing ideologues in Congress and on radio talk shows are determined to continue their campaign against Clinton. They never accepted his victory in 1992. They were devastated by his repeal victory in 1996 and have now been enflamed by his having escaped conviction. Their efforts are fed by a hard-core 30 to 35 per cent of the public who share their views and their hatred of the

Already some Republican candidates for the 2000 presidential nomination are seeking to make Clinton's behaviour and his impeachment an issue in their

campaign.

If this group will not let the matter rest, apparently neither will some Democrats. Reports have been circulating in recent days that some of the House Managers (as the Republican congressional prosecutors were called) have been targeted for defeat when they run for reelection for their congressional seats in 2000. It is unclear how this matter will

play out in the next year. Will the public punish those Democrats who defended the President or punish those Republicans who sought to remove him from office? Or will the public simply tune out and indicate no desire to replay this sordid saga? For his part, the president has continued. as he promised months ago, to proceed with the matters of state. To some extent this tactic has worked. While Republicans focused on impeachment and then conviction, their popularity rat-ings have fallen substantially below that of the Democrats. Currently one poll shows the Republicans favourable rating at 40 per cent as compared to a 57 per cent rating for the Democratic

Meanwhile, most polls are showing that Clinton's job performance rating is up to the mid-60

per cent range. And in a recent poll evaluating presidential greatness" Clinton's 43 per cent rating surpassed George Bush's 42 per cent and almost matched Eisenhower's 43.8 per cent rating. Far down the list were Carter

(31 per cent). Nixon (21 per cent), Johnson (18 per cent) and Ford (17 per cent).

This is not to say that the president has not been damaged by the events of the past year. While his defenders have been as vigorous in defending him as his detractors have been in attacking him, his image has been tarnished. His ability, however, to win public support for the initiatives of his presidency, however, does not seem to be so negatively effected, even if he is a "lame duck" President - that is serving in his last two years. Clinton's ability, however, to convince Congress to support him, is another matter. Despite calls by backers of both sides that the impeachment matter finally be put aside and the White House and Congress address the nation's business, it remains to be seen whether or not that can hap-

The Senate trial might be over, but with a ravenous media still eager to find and exploit a good fight and with the 2000 election season coming up soon, I expect that even if the majority of Americans don't want to have another partisan word spoken, the political battles will continue.

The Fateh anniversary — credit due

By Pascal B. Karmy

JAN. 1, 1999 marked the 34th anniversary of the creation of the Fatch movement. The occupation of Gaza and Sinai in 1956 by Israel in conjunction with the Suez crises constituted a turning point for the Palestinians. The latter came to realise that the Arab states would not be able to return them to their homeland. As a result the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Harakat Al Tahrir Al Watani Al Falastini (whose initials, in reverse in Arabic, gave the name Fateh) was created. The movement was led by Arafat, and his colleagues Abu Jihad, Abu Iyad and others, and is still a very important component of the PLO and by extension of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The very important role played by Fateh Palestine should not, however, minimise the role of other laudable Palestinian movements such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Dr. George Habash, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by Nayef Hawatmeh and Hamas.

After the occupation of Palestine by Israel, numerous raids were committed on Israel's borders by Palestinians particularly in 1954 from Gaza Strip, Jordan and Syria. Those who committed the raids were at first called infiltrators but subsequently Fedayyin — those who sacrifice themselves for a cause. The late Abu Jihad (Khalil Al Wazir) an important leader of Fatch and others participated in the first raids on Israel in 1954 from the Gaza Strip (it may be recalled that Abu Jihad was later killed by an Israeli commando at his borne in Tunis in 1988.) In fact many of the lead-

ers of Fateh were killed in the struggle: Kamal Adwan, Kamal Nasser, Abu Yussef (Mohammad Najjar), Abu Jihad (Khalil Al Wazir) and Abu Îyad (Salah Khalaf).

The first shot inaugurating the official Palestinian resistance against Israel was heard at midnight on Dec. 31, 1964-Jan. 1, 1965. It was the blowing up of a water pumping installation belonging to Israel near the Hebron-Bethlehem road. The operation was carried by Al Asifa - the military ann of Fateh - which was then unknown to the public. Following the above action leaflets were distributed in Beirut newspapers containing military communique No. 1 signed by the General Command of Asifa. The communique mentioned among other things: "On the night of Friday Dec. 31, 1964-Jan. 1, 1965 detachments of our strike forces went into them in the occupied territories and returning safely to their base."

In a second communiqué, which was of political character, Al Asifa announced that its forces were to prove to the world that the Palestinian people were not dead and that armed struggle was the only way to achieve victory and the return to Palestine. In expressing the will of the Palestinian people, Al Asifa forces were fully aware of the difficulty of such a political and military struggle, but realised they had to rely on their own resources and the strength and vigour of the Palestinian people because, as the late Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) one of the chief leaders of Fateh said, "...Arab states express to the Palestinians their largely platonic sympathy, promising much, but do not provide us The writer was an advocate in Palestine in in effect but with quasi-symbolic assistance." (See - Palestinien Sans Patrie par

Abu Iyad - Entretien avec Eric Roulean, page 31 of the French edition). In explaining the reasons for creating Fateh Abu Iyad said: "We came to the conclusion that unless we decide to take our destiny in our hands, no person will do anything for us... experience taught us that the usurpers ignored our appeal, our declarations and our petitions. Thus we had no choice; we had to take up arms."

Although Fateh's history is marked by tragedies, no fair-minded person can detract from its achievements. It has sustained the morale of the Arab Nation logather with other Palestinian movements, and awakened the Palestinian people after the tragic defeat of the Arab states in 1967. Who could forget the battle of Karameh fought shoulder to shoulder with the Jordanian army?

It is rateh which first started the guernila resistance movement against the Israeli occupation. It greatly contributed to putting the Palestine problem on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, when Arafat made his famous "gun or olive branch" speech, and Fateh's efforts eventually led to the intifada and today's peae process.

Sources of Information: 1. Palestinien Sans Patrie par Abu Iyad Entretien avec Eric Rouleau 2. Les Palestiniens - un peuple, par Xavier

3. The Gun and the Olive Branch by David

1944 and for many years legal officer at UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna.

Letters to the editor

'Embarrassing'

I WAS not surprised to read in your article this morning "Italian firm to rehabilitate water system" an embarrassing error, nor was I surprised to see you repeat other embarrassing errors in an adjacent article "RSS signs water quality control agreement with government." The Jordan Times is supposed to be the mature English Jordanian daily, but has displayed qualities to the otherwise since last summer.

In the first of the above articles, your correspondent reports that a U.S \$15 million advanced as a soft loan by Italy will generate 150,000 jobs! (one hundred fifty thousand). This translates into \$100 capital investment per job created, the cheapest job generating investment ever known. If readers take your words for granted, they would wonder why Jordan has not yet overcome unemployment from our labour market. ''''

In the second of the above articles, you repeat the talk of amateurs that has been occupying substantial space in your paper last summer. "Last summer," the article repeats. "foul water passed through the Zai plant creating a major water pollution crisis in Amman." Obviously, your correspondent never cared to have such information verified. If through the plant, and he would have known that no pollution, as is defined by the specifications, ever occurred. The crisis was a "supply crisis in West Amman resulting from untimely maintenance of the plant filters. The problem of traces of taste and odour was treated within 60 hours of its detection, and the pain the Water Authority had to go through was to remove the presence of harmless dead nematodes by request of the Ministry of Health. These efforts, since then, have not shown great success. I have seen many people in the profession who read your articles on the Internet, and they wondered how a country like Jordan would allow a minor problem of traces of taste in the water be blown up to the scale that the Jordan Times displayed. They, fortunately, did not know of the scale to which all other Arabic dailies had blown up the same problem. I advise that you require your correspondents to read the five technical reports written by world specialists in the profession about that same problem in the Zai plant. You would serve yourselves and your readers by so doing. The recurrence of this problem is to be expected. It happened in Ontario, in Chicago, and in Leahigh Valley, Pennsylvania more than once. Anyone who claims that it will not recur is either ignorant of the nature of the problem or is not being truthful.

Dr. Munther J. Haddadin

Letters of condolence

A tribute to our late King Hussein

PEOPLE IN Jordan and abroad are grieving and mourning the loss of His Majesty King Hussein; a great leader and a benevolent King. Jordan has lost not only a world renowned statesman and leader but also a caring father to all Jordanians. The late King's wisdom, humility, and humaneness were qualities that endeared him to his people and to all those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Throughout his life His Majesty King Hussein worked dili-gently to improve the quality of life for all the people of Jordan. Under His Majesty's leadership Jordan made outstanding strides and achievements in most fields. For those of us who lived abroad, we were always proud to reveal that we came from Jordan and belonged to what His Majesty always referred to as "the Jordanian Family." Throughout his reign, His Majesty strove hard to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable segments of society, particularly the children. His Majesty's deep concern for the welfare of the children in Jordan was transparent in his noble deeds towards the orphans and in entrusting Her-Majesty Queen Noor with the establishment and chairmanship of the National Task Force for Children to ensure the rights of children and to promote the quality of their lives, a worthy cause

which Her Majesty embraced with dedication and enthusiasm. It is at such a time of deep grief and sorrow that we, the people of Jordan try to seek solace and comfort by aspiring to preserve the legacy of our late and beloved King. His Majesty King Hussein had always urged us to "build this country and serve this nation." Perhaps we as individuals can best honour the memory of our late King by following in his path of undertaking our duties and responsibilities with utter dedication, commitment and conscientiousness; by being fair, compassionate and forgiving: and by extending help to the poor and needy whenever we

Most of us cannot help but shed tears when we see media images of our late King hugging and embracing the orphans in Jordan. For some of us these are the most cherished memories of His Majesty King Hussein, memories that are imprinted in our

minds and hearts for the rest of our lives. There are great lessons in compassion and humaneness to be learned from our late and beloved King who on many occasions, and despite his many engagements, took time off from his very busy schedule to visit and offer love and concern for the orphans and the disadvantaged. Remembering these humane deeds of His Majesty the late King Hussein, let us wipe our tears and the tears of the crying children, and let us comfort the orphans and the destitute in Jordan by assuring them that there are sons and daughters in the large Jordanian family who really care, who are most willing to help, and who are dedicated to embrace the legacy and noble ideals of their late King.

Let us all as members of one family be united in offering our dedicated services and contributions to our dear country and let us stand behind and support our new leader. His Majesty King Abdullah, son of His Majesty King Hussein, in order to continue the path of progress and prosperity of our beloved Jordan.

> Janet Abboud National Task Force for Children Amman

TEARS GATHER at the corner of our eyes, sorrow engulfs our hearts, the man who has been like a father figure to us over the past 47 years, has been summoned by God, leaving us speechless at his sudden departure. The man we have loved for most our lives, the man who took time to think of other people's needs and warmed so many hearts with gentle words and thoughtful deeds. Our great leader who sincerely tried to understand and sympathise added something very special to the world. We are absolutely devoted to him and his legacy of peace, development, unity among all Jordanians, and we are united under the leadership of the Hashemites. We're proud to be Jordanians because of King

> Zeinam Shennak Al Manhal Int. School Girls Section Amman

It's in the detail

AS AN attentive reader of Dr. Yusuf Mansur's highly esteemed articles in the Jordan Times, I cannot agree with some aspects of his article of Feb. 15 concerning the rules of on the one hand serve to avoid unjust practices, fraudulent detours of goods or harmful imbalances, thus also to the benefit of Jordanian industry. On the other hand, they promote the chances of less developed industries on their way to foreign markets by benefiting from preferential tariffs for the originating goods, thus also for Jordanian goods.

The problem lies in the details of these technical rules.

which indeed have serious impact on the complete structure of the industry by restricting the percentages of foreign inputs into the production or — which mostly is more harmful — by strictly ruling the details and/or the level and stages of the necessary production procedure (example: the production of garments). But there are institutional helps to match these conditions by using materials originating in the donor states (already possible against the EU) or to cooperate with regional neighbour states within a contracted "economic integration group," as Dr. Mansur called them. One of the most important reasons for these mergers were always the advantages of such commonly "cumulated" production of commodities.

> Helmuth Berndt Amman

Correction

In a front page article on Feb. 16 entitled "Jordan, IMF close to agreement on new programme - official," paragraph 10 should read as follows: Turning to the \$2.160 billion budget of 1999" - not the \$1.2 billion budget of 1999.

The Jordan Times seeks to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the Jordan Times at the numbers mentioned elsewhere on this page. By Philip Pol

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By Robert Fi

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with the conscience that pur down withe birds an Blood

By Luisetta A Vence France I

MILLIONS OF televis ections China are glues their screens to watch leader wage a bleady a hat against Staft and t the country a connormal The plot could easily hon of the hattles of Ch leaders as they swear to on corrupt officials at levels of government, a toffers of the state.

But the actors in this young hear the yellow Drag China's Chin emperors, although the

Ayatollah still casts shadow over new dawn

By Robert Fisk

NOT LONG after he returned to Iran, I had my only chance to talk to Ayatollah Khomeini.

We had been shown his thin blankets on the humble concrete floor of his home in Qom, told of the yoghurt that he are for breakfast and then shown into a tiny room crowded with Revolutionary Guards and Islamic clerics. The ayatollah lectured us on the evils of America, the necessity of deporting the Shah back to Iran for trial and the eternal nature of the Islamic Republic.

A small crack in the sun-drenched window had cast a pool of light on the floor; at this emanation, the ayatollah stared throughout our conversation. It was as if he was transfixed by this light; he never took his eyes off it.

It was half an hour before we grasped the fact that he would not look at us. He spoke in a slow, rasping but quiet voice, his words translated by Sadeq Qotbzadeh, his ally in Parisian exile whom he equally ignored.

A few years later, he would acquiesce in Qotbzadeh's execution for plotting against the Islamic Republic. Here, indeed, was a revolution that could consume its children.

Would the revolution, whose 20th anniversary Iranians celebrated yesterday, have been any different — any

By Philip Pullella

THE TALK of the town in Venice

these days is not of high technology to

Nor is it about a splendid exhibition

on the Mayans. It is about something

much more pedestrian --- pigeons and

Mayor Massimo Cacciari has ruf-

fled the feathers of animal rights

activists by ruling that many of the

famed black birds that carpet areas

such as St. Mark's Square will have to

be put down because they carry dis-

To protest against his ruling several

hundred animal rights activists recent-

ly marched through the square -

ltaly's largest pedestrian island -

blowing a "bugle of death" for the

The protesters — who say the birds

should not be killed but cured and

sterilised - held a mock funeral, with

some wearing mourning masks and

Cacciari, acting on a warning from

the local health department, decided

that something had to be done about

the estimated 120,000 pigeons in the

Apart from the damage to monu-

ments such as St. Mark's Basilica,

city officials say many of the birds are

sick and are potential transmitters of

half the birds caught in initial round-

ups so far were found to be carrying

salmonella or the chlamydion bacte-

ria, which can cause trachoma, a dis-

ease which can sometimes lead to

Animal rights activists responded to

They accused him of violating laws

against mistreating animals and con-

travening legislation on hunting

because the birds are caught with nets

when they are rounded up. Cacciari, a professor of philosophy

at Venice university, took the accusa-

"Dear friends, precise laws dictate

that a mayor has to protect the health

of his citizens. I respect and will con-

tinue to respect such laws," he said in

The mayor said he was at peace

with his conscience that the plans to

put down some birds and eventually

tions, well... philosophically.

an open letter to newspapers.

Cacciari's ruling by filing a suit with a

Health authorities found that about

stop flooding.

their droppings.

carrying coffins.

disease.

blindness.

regional court.

more generous — if Saddam Hussein had not invaded Iran in 1980 in the hope of destroying the new regime?

Already, the revolution's enemies in Tehran were being strung up or put before firing squads. I returned to Qom a few weeks later to report on the trial of a staff sergeant in the Shah's army, accused of firing at demonstrators in the last days of the Shah. The crowd in the courtroom demanded his death and I tried desperately to explain to the Americaneducated brother of the doomed man that the presence of a Western reporter would not spare him. I told the judge, privately, that I regarded mercy as the greatest of virtues. I was

wasting my time. There were no velvet gloves in the Iranian revolution. And after Saddam sent his legions across the frontier, I found myself in a troop train travelling north from the battlefields of Ahwaz, its dying passengers cough-ing the mustard gas out of their lungs into white bandages.

At the battle of the Fish Lake, young men took off their helmets to show their fearlessness amid the shellfire, the corpses of their Iraqi enemies piled around them, the shells hissing into the Somme-like mud. I spent an afternoon in a dug-out with Iran's young boy soldiers, some of them only nine, village boys with miniature swords of paradise hanging

Venice pigeons ruffle feathers

sterilise others will be guided by

Cacciari continued: "Don't bother

filing suits against the city or signing

petitions against me. They certainly

will do me less damage than that

caused by the pigeons." Cristina Romieri, head of the local animal

rights group, condemned the round-

up of the birds as "birth control by

She says rounding up the pigeons

"We don't agree with this very cruel

with nets groups healthy and sick

method," she told Reuters, adding that

the wings of some birds are broken in

the operation. She said the birds are

She also said the group's own vet-

erinary surgeons were waiting to see

the results of the tests showing the

birds were carrying bacteria, saying

Romieri accused the local media of

Polls show Cacciari has most of the

In one poll in the city's La Nuova

Venezia newspaper, some 79.9 per

cent of those questioned said they

believed the number of pigeons in the

Nearly 48 per cent said they wanted

sick birds to be killed immediately

and for healthy birds to be fed birth

city had to be reduced somehow.

waging a "terroristic press campaign

they were "open to interpretation."

denizens of Venice on his side.

"common sense."

birds indiscriminately.

later gassed.

against the pigeons.

around their necks to ensure their place in the next world.

When they rode their mopeds through the Iraqi minefields, they wore greatcoats in the heat — so that every part of their shattered bodies could be returned for burial.

Saddam was our man then. And when they've called for our support in bombing Iraq, not once have Western leaders mentioned those tens of thousands of Iranian victims of Saddam's butchery. That would be asking too much; besides, without the Iraqi invasion, the ferocious anger of the Iranian revolution may have cooled earli-

In the event, Khomeini — these are his words — "ate poison" when faced with the collapse of his Western front in 1988. In revenge, the regime turned on its imprisoned opponents. Young Iranian men and women, interrogated and lashed, many of them having already served their time in jail, were herded into courtyards for mass executions, hanged like thrushes on groaning scaffolds. Perhaps 8.000 died, some say many more.

In the new Iranian era, it is sometimes difficult - in the streets of Tehran or talking to the liberal, intelligent, bright young men now running part of the government — to imagine what cruelty was acted out in the

Islamic Republic's name. And with a president as admired as

Mohammed Khatami - democratically elected and more popular among his people than Israel's elected leaders — it seems almost churlish to remember the brutality of what went

But Iran's intransigent clerics are still there, as loyal to their dead Imam as the boys who drove to their death through the minefields. The Islamic Republic still has a Khomeiniinspired Supreme Leader — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - and it still has its enemies.

Khatami's brave attempt to open a dialogue with the United States was rebuffed by an administration whose Middle East policies are virtually identical with Israel's. Only this week, Martin Indyk, the former head of the most powerful Israeli lobby group in America and now U.S. Under-Secretary of State, was asking for Arab support for the old, discredited policy of dual - i.e.. Iraqi and Iranian - "containment." Has the memory of the 1979 siege of the U.S. embassy and the long months of imprisonment for its diplomats infected the Americans as deeply as the cruelty of the Shah neutered the compassion of the Iranians?

Alas, the brutality still exists. Even as Tehran was preparing its jazz bands and religious ceremonies to commemorate the revolution, an old Iranian woman was sentenced to amputa-

"...when they've called for our support in bombing Iraq, not once have Western leaders mentioned those tens of thousands

of Iranian victims

of Saddam's

butchery'

tion and then hanging for the murder of two young women. Only weeks after President Khatami was elected, a convicted Afghan rapist - his crimes were, of course, truly terrible was publicly hanged from a crane, his corpse suspended 300ft above a

This is not the future of Iran, merely a reminder of the harshness of its revolution. Khatami, if he is not

betrayed by his internal opponents or destroyed by the Americans who claimed they wanted to be his friends --- may yet turn Iran into one of the great peacemakers of the Middle East.

A laughable idea? What about the new missiles Iran is constructing? Or the reports of chemical warfare preparations? Or the old torturers still at

Well, how many other Middle East countries - Israel as well as the Arab nations - can claim to have no longrange missiles, no chemical warfare capability, no cruel old men in retirement?

The tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini is now a Shi'ite shrine of epic proportions, lit up so brightly that airline pilots can see its golden lights from 50 miles away. Was it not he who said that wherever oppression existed in the world, Iran would be fighting against it? Was it not he who said that we are men of war and we shall export our revolution to the entire world — until the cry of 'Allahu Akbar' reigns over the world, the struggle shall continue?"

Ten years after the old man's death. the West might pause to ask itself if there is still oppression and betrayal in the Middle East and to reflect upon the revolutionary forces that could still be stirred by its barbarity.

- The Independent

to the editor

ly. February In

Dr. James J. Zogs,

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MILLIONS OF television viewers across China are glued nightly to their screens to watch a supreme leader wage a bloody and desperate war against graft and try to revive the country's economy.

The plot could easily be a description of the battles of China's current leaders as they swear to crack down on corrupt officials at the highest levels of government, and refill the coffers of the state.

control in their food. Only 20.5 per cent said they believed only birth control should be

used to get a grip of the problem. Since pigeons in Venice mate as many as eight times a year, some experts believe that one way to stop them from reproducing so much is to

force them to go hunting for food rather than hunting for mates. If they have to go looking for food they will have less time to mate, some experts say. That means not feeding

the birds in the square, where traditionally tourists buy bags of maize for \$1.25 and then wait for the attack. But can a city like Venice ask or

order tourists not to feed the pigeons? To some, that would be like asking visitors to Disneyland not to have their picture taken with Mickey Mouse. Venice and pigeons even figure in the only picture police had of Mafia boss Toto Riina for the 23 years he was on the run before his arrest in

Riina, who spent most of his time

'...there will be initial round-ups and then we will decide how many are sick and will have to be put down and how many will have to have their reproductive cycles controlled'

ordering mob hits, relaxed with his children like any ordinary father and smiled into the camera as he fed the birds while he was on the run.

Mario Scatolin, the Venice city official whose office is overseeing project pigeon, said it was still not clear how many birds will have to be put down.

"First, there will be initial round-ups and then we will decide how many are sick and will have to be put down and how many will have to have their reproductive cycles controlled," he told Reuters.

Scatolin said limiting food in the square may not be enough because the pigeons just find food elsewhere in

the alleyways of the canal city. "You tell me where there is another city where there are 1,000 bars and restaurants in such a small area," he

Scatolin said the fact that many of the birds were believed to be carrying salmonella and other bacteria was cause enough for city officials to be

"If there is a single case of an infection by salmonella caused by a pigeon, I don't think anyone can contest the suppression. We want to prevent infection," Scatolin said.

"If disease spreads among animals in the wild that's one thing. If it happens in a city of 65,000 people with nine million visitors a year, that's

Russian veterans still bitter a decade after Afghan exit

By Oleg Shchedrov

A DECADE after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, many veterans feel as bitter and disillusioned as ever about the nine-year war.

"The best present the government could get for the 10th anniversary of the withdrawal would be if we all disappeared," said Boris Zhdanov, knocking back a generous shot of vodka.

Once a year, Zhdanov — among the last soldiers to leave Afghanistan in February 1989 — visits the grave of his friend Nikolai who died two months before the Soviet pullout.

"At least his gravestone says where he died," Zhdanov said, sprinkling another glass of vodka over the grave in a traditional Russian gesture. "Relatives of soldiers who had been killed earlier were not allowed to mention that for fear of 'demoralising the population'." In December 1979, the Soviet Union sent 80,000 troops into Afghanistan to support the leaders it had installed there.

The operation was planned as a "little victorious war" meant to thwart Western-backed Islamist rebels and subdue growing discontent over economic and social problems at home.

But the full-scale war proved too expensive for the creaking Soviet economy and the flow of zinc coffins with the bodies of dead soldiers, most of which were delivered in secrecy, only compounded the unpopularity of the ageing Soviet leadership.

The glasnost policy of more public openness encouraged by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev after he came to power in 1985 exposed the truth about the Soviet role in Afghanistan and the atrocities of the war, fuelling public rage and making withdrawal inevitable.

On February 15, 1989, the last Soviet commander in Afghanistan, General Boris Gromov, crossed a border bridge to complete the pullout. Behind him lay one million dead Afghans and the memory of 15,000 comrades in arms who perished.

Perhaps glasnost was good, but when we came back home people treated us as criminals, as if we started the war," Zhdanov said, "'We did not send you there' was the mildest answer one could get turning for official assisthe Afghan war waned in the years to follow — a period that included the collapse of communism, a series of regional wars and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in former Soviet republics in Asia and some southern Russian regions. Russian troops are stationed even

tance." The all-pervading distaste for

now in Tajikistan helping the government to stop Afghan Islamic guerrillas spreading their influence in the poverty-stricken Central Asian state. Between 1994 and 1996 tens of

thousands of people died in Russia's southern region of Chechenya, where Moscow waged an ill-fated war against separatist rebels in an operation often likened to the Afghan inva-

Many public and political leaders say that to keep the Islamic threat at bay in Afghanistan was perhaps more reasonable than to resist it now in Tajikistan or Chechenya. "I am not sorry for what happened in

Afghanistan," said Yuri Drozdov, who retired from the Soviet KGB security service in 1991 as a major-general and played an important role in the covert operation to install a client administration in Kabul.

"I am very sorry that the leadership failed to assess fully the situation which arose at that time and, as a result of ill-conceived actions, complicated the situation which we are witnessing now," he said, echoing a widespread opinion.

The change of tide in cash-squeezed Russia did little to help up to \$00,000 Afghan war veterans. They are effectively left on their own.

"If it were not for veterans' organisations, society would certainly try to forget about us," said Alexander Kovalyov, the head of the Moscow regional association of Afghan veterans, which has 14,000 people including 420 invalids on its books.

The authorities don't like us because we remind them of the hundreds of thousands people they sent to war," he said.

Apart from psychological problems suffered by most servicemen after Afghanistan, many veterans endure difficulties with wounds and tropical diseases. Only a few can afford proper medical care.

"I retired as major and with all bene-

fits, including for serving in Afghanistan, I get 800 roubles as a monthly pension, less than \$40," Kovalyov says. "The smallest surgical operation costs at least \$1,000, so you can work it out for yourself." The state has launched several programmes to help the veterans, but few have been carried out because of lack of cash.

The only notable help — tax and import duty exemptions granted for veterans' organisations — proved more of a headache than assistance.

The exemptions, allowing cheap imports of highly profitable goods such as spirits, tobacco and cars, made the veterans' organisations attractive for criminals.

Many turned into fronts for illegal businesses and some of their members into highly qualified hitmen. Several of their leaders have been killed in criminal feuds.

"There is a public presumption that nearly all Afghan war veterans are gangsters," Kovalyov said. "But our estimates show that only one per cent of veterans are involved in criminal businesses, less than in many other social groups." But he agreed the criminal factor existed.

"Well, first of all it was stupid to grant benefits and give no access to credits to use them. One has to borrow money somewhere to use these benefits..." Kovalyov said the problem with veterans' businesses was likely to be solved automatically now that the government was planning to scrap most benefits. He could not say the same about the veterans' needs.

"If these benefits go and no replacement is offered, I think the veterans' movement will disappear together with the help it offered," he said.

Despite their woes, most veterans' organisations try to keep their members away from politics. And Kovalyov believes the task is not difficult one.

"We have many politicians waltzing around us, especially before the withdrawal anniversary which coincides with the start of the parliamentary election campaign," he said, referring to December's vote for the State Duma, or lower house.

But we were taught well not to believe them, not to believe the state. We don't want to be sent to yet another adventure and told later it was a wrong one."

Bloodthirsty emperor tops ratings in graft-ravaged China

By Luisetta Mudie Agence France Presse

But the actors in this drama, "The Yongzheng Dynasty," which unfolds every evening on state television, wear the vellow Dragon robes of China's Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) emperors, although the parallels with

lost on millions of fans. "Everyone's glued to it. It's about

Emperor Yongzheng, who used to be regarded officially as a bad guy for the harshness of his punishments," said one viewer who never misses an episode. "But now they're changing their view of him because he was so hard on corruption and left a lot of money in the treasury for his succes-SOTS.

The \$3.1 million series, shown at prime time on China's Central Television (CCTV) Channel 1, has garnered top ratings since it began just over four weeks ago. It has become so talked about that CCTV was forced to start the 41-part series again from episode one on another channel so those who heard about it

present-day China are by no means but didn't tune in at the start could catch up.

"I think people just like seeing corrupt officials punished," said one woman viewer. "If an official was found to be corrupt in his day, Yongzheng would have their whole family put to death."

China's current leaders, faced with flagging economic growth and pitiful revenues trickling into state coffers, are racing to stem the tide of rampant official corruption lest they, as was the tradition with weakened emperors, lose their mandate to rule.

There are increasing reports of protests from disgruntled peasants and laid off workers. There are acts of despair like the man who walked into a cinema and detonated a belt of explosives he was wearing.

'I think people just like seeing corrupt officials punished'

CCTV's show gives its audience what is becoming rare in real life: a harsh but fair leadership, and a sense of justice for a people and country bled dry by corrupt officials.

Emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735), once regarded with fear and loathing because he killed even his own brothers in his bid to hold onto power, has been rehabilitated to epitomise the kind of leadership the Communist Party would like, in its own way, to provide.

"It's a radically different treatment of Yongzheng's rule from that which has gone before," a China Central Television spokesman told AFP.

Former television series have shown Yongzheng as a tyrant who cheated his father, intimidated his mother and killed his brothers. Some tales say he was a womaniser and an alcoholic - others blast him as a tyrant without pastimes.

Yongzheng's image was given its facelift by novelist Ling Jiefang. who provided the basis for the screenplay, and China's leading woman director Hu Mei. The good looks of actor Tang Guoqiang, well known for playing nice young men,

put the finishing touches to the public relations job.

'Yongzheng (was actually) a reform-minded crusader whose policies did help strengthen the country's economic might, reduce the gap between rich and poor and bring about stability." Ling said in a recent interview with the official media.

Yongzheng was said to attend to

state affairs from morning to midnight, a hard-working reputation he shares with current Premier Zhu Rongji. Zhu has also reportedly pledged to "kill, kill," in an ongoing crackdown on graft. Whether Zhu's actions will lead to an extension of Communist Party rule for another 100 years, as Yongzheng's did for the Qing Dynasty, history alone will tell.

Financial services liberalisation accord to take effect March 1— WTO

GENEVA (AFP) — An finish agreement liberalising trade in financial services will take effect from March 1 as scheduled, following a decision this week by 52 governments, the World Organisation (WTO) has said.

These governments, including those of the United States, Japan. and all but one of the European Union (EU) states, have already rati-fied the accord reached in December 1997 at WTO Geneva headquar-

Backers of the liberalisation pact account for about 95 per cent of global activity in banking, brokerage, insur-ance, and fund manage-

The pact was set to come into force on March 1.

But because 18 gov-ernments among the 71 signatory parties, among which is the European Commission, have yet to

the required domestic procedures formally to accept the deal, those that have completed the work were given the right to decide whether to start on time, or agree to a delay.

The ones which are ready account for the overwhelming bulk of financial services activi-

Meeting to pronounce on the issue, representa-tives from 52 govern-ments decided that "the date would not be changed", the WTO

They were confident that these countries would come on board as quickly as their procedures allow them to." a WTO official said.

WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero said that the decision was a vitally important element in providing stability to the financial sector, particularly in developing countries.

ty in global financial markets, this agreement provides a solid foundation for improvement of financial practices, for enlarging the pool of capital available to businesses and consumer and for increasing the transparency of financial

operations around the

world," Ruggiero said. Ruggiero urged governments not yet on the list to ratify the protocol as soon as possible, stressing the accord was not aimed at liberalising capital flows but at creating opportunities for businesses to establish toeholds and expand

overseas. The WTO's council for trade in services extended the deadline for accepting the pact, known as the fifth protocol to the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services, for another months starting

immediately. The new cut-off point

"At a time of instabili- is June 15, 1999 in place and with differing tim of an original deadline of Jan. 29.

Most Asian countries who joined the pact have ratified the protocol, including economically hard-hit Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea.

The Philippines is the one notable Asian country still outstanding.
Australia, Brazil, Luxembourg and Costa Rica are also among the have-

Though committed to carry out their liberalisacommitments, countries who have not ratified cannot be judged by the WTO's dispute settlement machinery when the financial services pact takes effect.

The deal, struck after nine months of negotiations, and tough last minute bargaining by a handful of countries, chiefly the United chiefly States, liberalises key domestic financial sectors to varying degrees frames.

As the United States already the world's mos open banking and insur ance market, Washing ton pressed hard t secure more concession for its financial service industry, mainly from previously fast-growin economies in Asia.

U.S. negotiators insist ed that serious commit ments from these coun tries would reassur investors who had fle the region when the cur rency and stockmarke turmoil first started i July 1997.

The size of the finan cial service sector ha exploded in the las decade. About \$1.5 tril lion are traded daily i the foreign exchange markets and total bank ing assets are estimated at more than \$20 trillion and insurance premium at \$2 trillion.

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Israeli consumer prices plunge as recession deepens

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's consumer price index (CPI) dropped 0.5 per cent in January, its biggest monthly fall in decades, in a new sign of the deepening recession in the country.

Economists attributed the surprisingly sharp drop in the index as reported by the state statistics bureau to a combination of lower merchandise prices and a fall in the value of the dollar housing, which is pegged which drove down hous- to the dollar and was driing costs.
This is the sharpest

drop in the consumer price index in many, many decades," said Neil Sandler, economic analyst for Israeli public radio. Sandler said winter

clothing and shoe sales had contributed to bringing prices down.

But the most significant change was in the price of

ven down by a 7-8.per cent rise in the value of the Israeli shekel against the U.S. currency in December and January, he

In a further sign of economic trouble, the Purchasing Managers Index compiled among Israeli companies and a key indicator of business activity fell five per cent from December to January to hit 40.9 per cent, its lowest level ever.

"This means that the recession is getting deeper and things are not improving." Sandler said.

Analysts said the drop in the price index and other signs of recession would likely lead Israel's central bank to order a bigger than expected cut in its main interest rate when its meets later this month. The committee had been

expected to cut its base rate by 0.33 percentage points, but now migh lower it half a point, they

Consumer prices rose 8.6 per cent in 1998, com pared with seven per cen the previous year - the lowest in three decades.

The CPI rose 0.1 per

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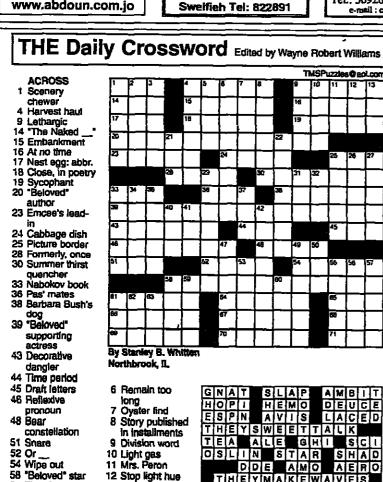
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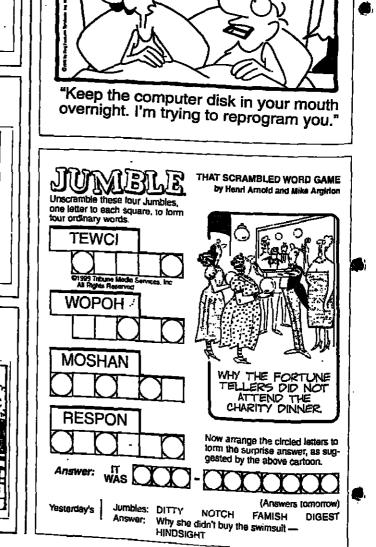
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A review of news from the Arabic Press

Saudis top list of Arab Gulf visitors during first eleven months of 1998

** VISITORS COMING from Arab Gulf states represented 61.97 per cent of the total number of tourists who visited the Kingdom during the first eleven months of 1998, statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities showed. The number of visitors also rose by 29.5 per cent from 569,092 persons during the first eleven months of 1997 to 736.955 persons during the same period of 1998.

Saudis topped the list as they accounted for 78.3 per cent of all Arab Gulf visitors or 577,086 persons. Kuwait ranked second as the number of visitors totalled 79,863 persons or 10.8 per cent.

Visitors coming from Israel during the period covered represented 9.5 per cent of the total number of visitors which the ministry put at 1,189,216 persons. However, the number of Israelis was less in 1998 as the total registered last year was 112,785 persons compared to 115.002 persons in 1997.

The number of tourists coming in groups totalled 219,768 persons, a 12.6 per cent drop from the 249,916 total posted in 1997. The statistics said that the average stay of tourists within groups was 4.15 nights in 1998 compared to 3.9 nights in 1997 (Al Ra'i).

Investments in hotels increase

** THE SIZE of investments in hotels of 2,200 rooms. which were started in 1998, was estimated at around JD390 million, an official source at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has said. He added that the number of hotel projects from 5 stars to one-star was 72 in addition to hotel suites of 6,134 rooms capacity.

The source indicated that the total number of classified tourist hotels throughout the Kingdom and of all types has reached 211 hotels with a capacity of 11,513 rooms at the end of last year. Furnished apartments and suites, he added, totalled 33 with a capacity of 856 rooms." The cost of these installations has reached around JD500 million," the source noted. He noted that there was a total of 170 "public hotels" which have a capacity

According to the source, investment opportunities in the tourism field witnessed a record expansion during 1998. He indicated the number of hotels increased from 129 hotels in 1994 to 211 hotels in 1998. Consequently, the hotel rooms increased from 7,250 to 11,513 rooms during the period.

He highlighted the role of the tourism sector as it contributes to 11 per cent of the gross domestic product. "The tourism sector constitutes more than 35 per cent of Jordanian exports and provides more than 28.000 jobs," the source concluded

Olympic

Airways

reports loss

ATHENS (AFP) - Olympic

Airways made a loss of 39 bil-

lion drachmas (117.9 million

euros, \$136.8 million) in

The company had planned a

profit of 6.86 billion drach-

The airline had forecast ini-

tially that, in the context of a

first restructuring plan, in

1997 it would make a net

profit of 30 billion drachmas,

and this was later reduced to

14 billion drachmas, and then

In 1997 expenditure rose by

26 per cent and income by

14.2 per cent. Turnover

amounted to 274.8 billion

The business newspaper

Kathimerini has reported that

the company is likely to report

a loss for 1998 of five billion

The government said

recently that it wanted to put

management of the airline

into the hands of a foreign

investor. Newspaper reports

suggest that offers will be

invited in the next few days

and that among the companies

interested was a subsidiary of

British Airways (BA),

The Greek government also wants to sell 15 to 20 per cent

of the airline to a foreign part-

ner, but experts here say that

foreign investors are unlikely

to be interested in the near

In November the state and

the airline agreed a five-year

plan to apply a first round of

announced in March but were

then adapted in response to

which were

future in view of the losses.

to 16 billion drachmas.

to 6.86 billion drachmas.

drachmas.

Speedwing.

1997, the board has said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Looks like you're building a ladder to climb to the top, but the most important thing about today happens later, when you get in touch with the reason you're going to all this trouble. Love is what's really important, and if there's not quite enough of it in your life, maybe its because you've been climbing too

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Things appear to be going. very well again today, and then a breakdown in communication occurs. You don't have to be nervously waiting for it. All you have to do is watch out for it. Pay attention to what's going on. The overall results for the day are likely to be positive, especially if you keep your eyes open.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Someone is trying to to you something today - not by words alone, but primarily by example. A person you admire a great deal may take on something extremely difficult. If you see something like that happening, pay attention. You can mimic what the other person does, even if you can't quite explain it.

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CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) Today it looks like the hassles are over relatively, early, leaving clear sailing for you and the one you love. Plan something special for this evening. Taking off for Tahiti may be what you have in mind, but dinner at a Tahitian restaurant might be the best you can do.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Today, take a moment or two to reflect on what you have and what you're going to leave to future generations. If you start saving money now, by the time you're old enough to retire, you'll be fabulously wealthy. If you aren't already doing this, today is a marvellous day to begin.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Looks like things will go well today, but not quite the way you expected. Your conversation with a partner has got its ups and downs, but don't worry. The disagreements won't last long. Go ahead and hash out all the details, confident that by the time you go to sleep, everything will be hunky-dory. LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You could be mistake-prope today, so watch out. You haven't quite mastered something you thought you'd learned by now, and everything you don't know will probably be pointed out to you. Don't be too hard on yourself. Just put in the correction and keep going. Actually, you're doing fine. This is all part

of the learning process. SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There's some sort of problem concerning money again, and it looks it also involves love. Perhaps you and your sweetheart want to do something you really can't afford yet. Well, if the love is strong, you'll find a way. Don't worry about that, Celebrate the love and you'll find a way to make enough

SAGITTARIUS:(November 22 to December 21) No matter what's going on today, don't worry. There's a happy ending, and a couple of adventures in between here and there won't hurt a bit. One of those might be a misunderstanding with a person you like a lot. Don't just assume you know what was meant by his or her words, especially if they hurt your feelings, Ask.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You could become quite wealthy, but right now it looks like someone else is getting most of your money. Is that because you're putting it in a safe place, investing for your own future? Either that, or you're paying off bills, another noble gesture. You need to put a structure, and stashing something

away for the future might be part of it. AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 18) Looks like you have no problem getting the money to come in today. The problem is figuring out how to disperse it. You should be thinking about all your options, but be slow to act. If you can wait until this weekend, you'll probably save quite a bit. By then, you'll have seen what's important and what's

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) What the other person said and what you heard were two different things, so be careful if you're thinking about spreading gossip. You could send things off in a whole different direction than was originally intended. You're getting stronger and more confident all the time, but you need to be responsible, too.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst - Onyx

Arab Gulf markets face tough lessons in '99

DUBAI (R) — Equity mar- the main theme for 1999 and kets across the Arab Gulf region, most of which are still in their infancy, face growing pains in 1999 as they suffer from slumping oil prices and economic belt-tightening.

All the Arab Gulf states are dependent on oil revenues to a greater or lesser degree, and when oil prices crashed to 12year lows in 1998 it took a heavy toll on most of their economies and their stock markets.

Saudi Arabia — the region's biggest economy and the world's largest oil producer and exporter — suffered as much as any.

"The Saudi oil-dependency problem was very amplified in 1998...it became very clear that the Saudi economy would be on a roller-coaster ride as long as it was dependent on a single commodity," said Beshr Bakheet of Bakheet Financial Advisors (BFA) in a report.

"All eyes are watching the government's efforts on the diversification and privatisation fronts, which should be its success would be mirrored by the stock market," Bakheet

Last year the Saudi index fell nearly 28 per cent lower. the market's third worst year since its launch 15 years ago. Saudi Arabia has no official trading floor but computerised trading is carried out through banks.

Omani shares - which soared 141 per cent in 1997 --plunged more than 50 per cent in 1998 on the country's official bourse.

The Bahrain Stock Exchange (BSE) ended the year 5.3 per cent down, following gains of 49.4 per cent in 1997. The Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) — the Arab World's second largest market in terms of capitalisation after Saudi Arabia - shed 40 per

Only Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) bucked the falling trend, but analysts said gains of some 35 per cent on the Qatari market were largely due to the fact it was only established in mid-1997 and most shares were not trading at fair value before that.

The UAE market was also said to have ended higher, but it has no formalised trading or central pricing system as yet and shares are currently traded by a handful of brokers licensed by the central bank.

Andrew Cunningham, senior credit officer at Moody's in Cyprus, said there had undoubtedly been enormous progress in Gulf equity markets over the last 10 years, as shown by the number of new local brokerage houses and equity research houses that had sprung up in the

"However, the problem remains that despite that progress these are thin markets often driven by speculation rather than economic fundamentals," he said.

Over the next year, liquidity in the region will remain tight, mainly due to low oil prices, and that will make it very difficult for stock markets to recover," Cunningham

A senior bank executive at a Riyadh-based bank said that much of the equity markets' performance would depend on the severity of the winter and how oil price panned out during the course of the year.

"I think currently investors will need a few more encouraging bits of news before they venture back into (these markets) in any major way," he

Economic diversification and spreading the source of their revenues is not a new issue for the Arab Gulf states, but the recent collapse in oil prices and a subdued economic outlook in the short-term has made them even more pressing concerns.

Ironically, analysts say, this bleaker economic outlook may also be positive for regional stock markets because it would force governments into pressing ahead with privatisation schemes.

"With two consecutive years of declining oil revenues it's going to be very uncomfort-

able for those governments and economies," Andrew Gilmour, director Middle East and Africa at the Londonbased Economist Intelligence Unit, told Reuters.

"They (the governments) are going to have to make economic adjustments, but some of those adjustments could actually benefit the stock mar-

kets," he said. Analysts said the Arab Gulf markets had also felt the knock-on effect of the sharp fall from grace of the so-called "Asian tigers" over the last two years, which led many global investors to tar all emerging markets with the same brush.

They also said political concerns would continue to play an important role in determining sentiment on regional equity markets. And further tensions with Iraq would weigh on shares across the

"Politics and oil prices are what it's really all about," one

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ARAB EK	215,000	215.500	+ 0.23%			
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INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1.550	1.530	- 1.29%			
THE HOUSING BK	3.030	2.960	- 2.31%			
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.700	1.700				
JO. GULF Bk	0.700	0.700				
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.700	1.790	+ 5.29%			
JO, INVES,&FIN. BK	1.350	1.360	+ 0.74%			
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.550	0.550	0.00%			
BANKS INDEX	285,070	point =	-0.14%			
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JO. GULF INS	. 1.860	1.770	- 4.84%			
INSURANCE INDEX	125.170	point =	-0.46%			
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ELECTRIC POWER .	1,800	1.770	- 1.67%			
IRBID ELECTRICITY	1.700	1.700	0.00%			
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.840 _	0.810	- 3.57%			
REAL ESTATE	1.060	1.080				
JO. INT'L TRADING CENT	0.270	0.260	- 3.70%			
AL-RA'I	7.110	7.300	+ 267%			
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.890	0.880	- 1.12%			
ARAB INT'L FOR INVES.& E		2,000	0.00%			
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.190	1.180	- 0.84%			
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GRAND INDEX	115.700	point =	-0.10%			
IND	USTRY		-			
CEMENT	3.710	3.680	- 0.81%			
PHOSPHATE	2.480	2.380	- 4.03%			
ARAB POTASH -	4.140	4.170	+ 0.72%			
	10.880	10,880	0.00%			
	4 000	4 000	0.00%			

CEMENT	3.710	3.680	- 0.81%			
PHOSPHATE	2.480	2.380	- 4.03%			
ARAB POTASH	4.140	4.170	+ 0.72%			
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.880	10,880	0.00%			
THE IND. COMM.& AGRICU	1,080	1.090	+ 0.93%			
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	3.230	3.200	- 0,93%			
CERAMIC IND	1.350	1.370	+ 1.48%			
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.450	1.510	+ 4.14%			
NTL STEEL	0.540	0.530	- 1.85%			
DAR AL DAWA	5.800	5.680	- 2.07%			
MIDDEL EAST COMPLEX	0,580	0,570	- 1.72%			
JO. STEEL	0.960	0.950	- 1,04%			
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.910	1.900	- 0.52%			
CHLORINE	1.230	1.230	0.00%			
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0,410	0,420	+ 2.44%			
NT'L IND	0.360	0.360	0.00%			
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.310	0.310	0.00%			
CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE	1.060	1.060	0.00%			
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.010	1.000	- 0.99%			
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.430	0.450	+ 4.65%			
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	1.360	1.340	- 1,47%			
EL-ZAY	1.360	1.310	- 3.68%			
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.680	0.670	- 1.47%			
IND. RESOURCES	0.450	0.440	- 2.22%			
NEW CAPLES	0.620	0,610	- 1.61%			
NT'L ALUMINIUM	0.750	0.790	+ 5.33%			
NDUSTRY INDEX	97.020	point =	-0.48%			
PARALLEL						
ZEXPORT Bk (75	0.940	0.920	- 2 13%			
UNION INVES. CORP	0.900	0.900	0.00%			
AL - EKBAL	0.870	0.890	+ 2.30%			
ADVANCED PHAR	0.530	0.530	0.00%			
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.430	0.450	+ 4.65%			
AL DAWLIAH	0.620	0.620	0.00%			
ARAB INVESTORES	0.950	1.000	+ 5.26%			
SPECIALZED INVES	0.730	0.690	- 5.48%			
OPTICAL & AUDIAL	0.420	0.420	0.00%			

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES >

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES IN JORDAN extends to His Majesty

ARAB INVESTORES SPECIAL ZED INVES OPTICAL & AUDIAL

King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein,

The Hashemite Family and the Jordanian people

their deepest sympathy and condolences on the passing of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal

May God rest his soul in peace

CBJ total assets stand at JD3.4b

AMMAN (Petra) — Total assets at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) stood at JD3,383.3 million at the end of December 1998, according to CBJ sources.

The sources said CBJ gold was worth JD144.8 million, and the total amounts of cash and deposits at hand amounted to JD1,176.5 million. Bonds in foreign currency amounted to JD63.6 million, the source

According to the CBJ budget, which was published in the Official Gazette, the total assets of the agreements of exchange amounted to December and the total of cur- amounting to JD55.5 million.

JD193.7 million, while other assets in non-foreign currency totalled JD718 million. The CBJ's contributions in international and regional financial institutions totalled JD 31.8 million, according to the CBJ budget.

The bank's total assets in

local currency amounted to JD 1.053.7 million, including bonds, securities and government notes worth JD424 million, and discounted bonds worth JD 608.6 million. As for liabilities, the curren-

cy issued totalled JD 1.005.3 million at the end of rent accounts and deposits in Jordanian dinars amounted to JD1,584.5 million, including JD12.5 million with public institutions and JD599 million with licensed banks, in addition to JD971 million in the form of certificates of deposit. Current accounts and deposits

in convertible currency amounted to JD 647.8 million, including JD389 million with licensed banks.

The budget report said that there are commitments against the Special Drawing Rights, amounting to JD 6.5 million. in addition to other liabilities

Freight rates to increase by \$800 between Asia and Europe

SINGAPORE (AFP) -Freight rates between Asia and Europe are set to rise by as much as \$800 per TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units) by October this year, the Business Times has said.

Average freight rates between the two continents in the third quarter of 1998 stood at \$1,400 per TEU, according to figures from Clarkson Research Studies, the report

If two more proposed rate increases scheduled for July and October are agreed upon,

the TEU rate increase will be a nearly 60 per cent jump from the average freight rates last year, the report noted.

An industry source told the

paper that the Asia Westbound Rate Agreement, a unit of the Far Eastern Freight Conference, was proposing a rate increase of \$300 per TEU on July 1, and another \$150 increase by October 1.

The conference has already implemented a \$200 per TEU increase between Asia and Europe on Jan. 1, and another increase per TEU of \$150 is

expected by April 1, the report

The source said he expected the later increases would be implemented since this would occur during the peak season for shipping. Members of the Far Eastern

Freight Conference, which include huge lines such as Maersk Line, Mitsui-OSK Lines, P and O Nedlloyd and Nippon Yusen Kaisha, control about 65 to 70 per cent of the liner capacity in trade between Europe and Asia, the report

Canon posts record profit in 1998

TOKYO (AFP) - Japan's the top maker of copying Canon Inc. has said the parent company's pre-tax profit rose 2.2 per cent to 150.1 billion yen (\$1.3 billion) in calendar 1998, the fourth

consecutive record result. Sales climbed 2.1 per cent machines, printers and other precision equipment.

higher taxes.

to 81.9 billion yen due to "Sales were slack in Japan and the Asian region but

United States and Europe," the company said in a state-

Net profit fell 4.9 per cent For 1999, Canon forecast pre-tax profit would fall to 100 billion yen and net profit to 57 billion yen. It estimated sales at 1,580 bilto 1,566.8 billion yen, said stayed firm generally in the lion yen.



The Consul General of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Dominican Republic **BISHARA ISSA MILADEH**



mourn with deep grief, the loss of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal

(May God bless his soul)

and wish to extend to

His Majesty King Abdullah

and the Royal Hashemite Family heartfelt

condolences and sympathy

Jazz beat Kings in OT to stay unbeaten

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Bryon Russell scored nine of his career-high 25 points in overtime as the Utah Jazz continued the best start in franchise history with a 120-112 victory over the pesky Sacramento Kings Monday.

Karl Malone finished with 26 points and a key three-point play in the final minute for the Jazz, whose 6-0 record is best in the NBA. Shandon Anderson netted five points in the extra session as Utah scored 17 points in the overtime, only five less than it scored in the fourth

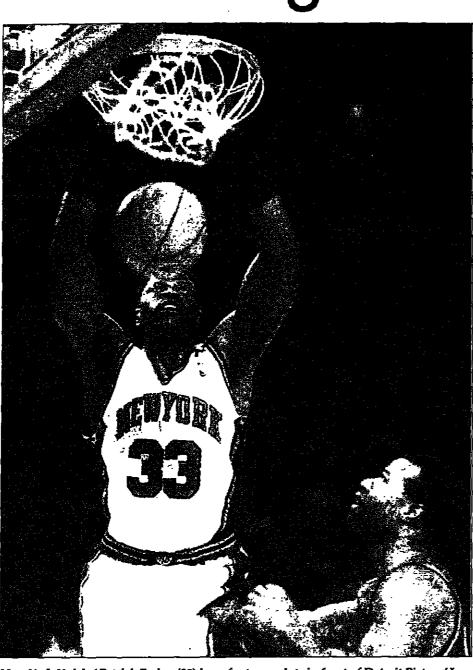
"It sounds like a broken record, but we're thankful for the win," said Jazz guard John Stockton, who totalled 10 points and 15 assists. "We did some nice things down the stretch. I thought, a lot of guys made some really big plays for

Chris Webber scored 26 points before fouling out and rookie Jason Williams added 19 as Sacramento erased a 13-point thirdquarter deficit. The Kings have lost nine straight games at the Delta Centre and 17 of their last 19 visits

"We just couldn't get over the hump for some reason, then in overtime, having Vlade (Divac) and Chris both foul out really hurt us," said Kings coach Rick Adelman.

Williams' third 3-pointer of the fourth quarter gave the Kings a 103-100 lead with 47 seconds to go, but Malone drew a foul on Webber attempting a 3-pointer 16 seconds later. He hit all three free throws to tie the game. After a timeout, Williams fired the ball into Webber, whose hook shot spun out.

Lawrence Funderburke's follow shot was blocked from behind by Russell. and Funderburke com-



New York Knicks' Patrick Ewing (33) jams for two-points in front of Detroit Pistons' Loy Vaught during the first period of their game on Monday at Madison Square Garden in

ing Thurl Bailey with 10.1 seconds to play in regulation. But Bailey missed both free throws, giving the Kings another chance. But Williams' 30-footer

bounced off the back rim. Utah scored the first seven points of overtime to remain one of just two undefeated teams in the

NBA along with the Seattle SuperSonics (5-0).

Oakland, Antawn Jamison's tip-in with four seconds remaining proved to be the difference as the Golden State Warriors snapped a sevengame losing streak against Minnesota Timberwolves with a 10199 victory.

Stephon Marbury hit a leaner in the lane to bring the Timberwolves even at 99-99 with 34 seconds remaining and on the ensupossession, Warriors received a new shot clock following a kicked ball violation. Marshall' Donyell

unleashed an air ball from the right corner but Terry Cummings got the rebound and put up a follow shot that Jamison tipped in to give the Warriors the lead for good. Minnesota had one last chance to tie it but Sam Mitchell's jumper as time expired hit the side of the rim. Jamison scored a season-

high 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead the Warriors, who have won consecutive games following an 0-5 start.

Kevin Garnett scored 29 points and grabbed 10 rebounds Minnesota, denied its first 5-1 start in team history. In Miami, Alonzo Mourning had 34 points, 17 rebounds and seven blocks as the Heat overpowered the New Jersey Nets, 95-72, for the fifth time in the last six meetings of the developing rivalry.

Working against Jayson Williams and Seikaly, Mourning dominated inside and outside. He hit a handful of midrange jumpers and also pushed around the Nets in the post, flexing his bicep after one dunk.

Mourning made 12-of-18 shots and 10-of-18 free throws while the Nets settled for perimeter shots and were just 9-of-14 from the

In New York, the Knicks went more than 12 minutes without a basket in the second half but managed enough offense down the stretch in a 78-69 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

In winning their third straight game, the Knicks held their second straight foe below 70 points, tying a shot-clock era record set by the 1994-95 Cleveland Cavaliers and matched last season by the Indiana

Although the Knicks allowed superstar Grant Hill to score 31 points, they limited the Pistons to 33



Sacramento Kings forward Chris Webber (L) has the ball knocked away on his way to the basket by Utah Jazz forward Karl Malone (R) during the first quarter of their NBA game on Monday (Reuters photo)

Kidd collected 28 points,

13 assists and 11 rebounds

per cent (26-of-78) from the field, including 0-of-7 from 3-point range. They also blocked 12 shots, including six by Patrick

Ewing. In Denver, Jason Kidd recorded the first tripledouble of the season and the 20th of his career, lead-

ing the Phoenix Suns to a 115-106 victory over the

as the Suns improved to 4-2 on the season. George McCloud scored nine of his 24 points in the second quarter, when Phoenix erased a 19-point

deficit to take the lead for good. Denver's Bryant Stith led

a late comeback attempt that came up short, scoring 10 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter.

In Portland, Arvydas Sabonis scored 16 points. grabbed 10 rebounds and dished out a career-high nine assists as the Trail Blazers defeated the Dallas Mayericks for the fifth straight time, 99-84. .. ,

HBO signs Hamed as its first worldwide television property

LONDON (AP) — Undefeated WBO featherweight champion Prince Naseem Hamed set out 14 months ago to conquer the U.S. mar-

He seems to have succeeded and more.

The U.S. cable television network Home Box Office (HBO) announced Tuesday it had purchased the worldwide television rights — its first such deal — for Hamed's fights.

The six-fight contract over two years begins with Hamed's 12th title defence April 10 in Manchester, England, against little-known Briton Paul Ingle (21-0), the undefeated European and Commonwealth champion.

Hamed's next two fights will be in the United States, the second in the summer and probably in Las Vegas or New York - and the third in November or December and HBO's first shot at putting Hamed on payfor-view.

Financial terms were not dis-closed. But Kery Davis. HBO's director of programing, said, "when you add all of his deals up he will be the equivalent of any major sports figure in America.

The April fight will be the first for

Hamed (31-0) since a disappointing 12-round unanimous decision over Wayne McCullough in Atlantic City on Oct. 31. Hamed was tagged several times and did more clowning in

the ring than boxing.

The Ingle fight will also his first bout since an acrimonious split with long-time promoter Frank Warren

and trainer Brendan Ingle. Hamed, 24, is now being managed by his brother Riath Harned, with long-time British promoter Barry Hearn handling the Ingle fight and probably the next several.

But the boss is HBO. "Right now the promoter, whoever it will be ... will be working for Naseem, but Naseem's primary financial arrangement for television will be handled by U.S. (HBO)," Lou Dibella, senior vice president of

HBO, said in a telephone interview. "To a large extent we have cut out the middleman," he added. "i think Naz has a lot of reasons to be a very happy young man today.'

Dibella said Hamed's reputation following the McCullough debacle probably needed more rehabilitation in Britain than in North America, hence the fight with an Englishman in England.

"I wanted to give the British public something back again," Hamed said at a news conference. "I want to cause the atmosphere and the buzz that I do cause when I fight."

Hamed, who is quick and unorthodox and throws punches from all angles, bragged about his new trainer - American Oscar Suarez - and was more subdued than usual, which his brother put off to having a "teething seven-month old baby in the house.'

"I've found a wicked new trainer that's unbelievable from the States,' Hamed said. "I'm so confident in my ability now, even more confident than before. I now know how a world champion should train."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Heynckes refuses to become saviour of Moenchengladbach

BERLIN (AP) — Jupp Heynckes has refused to become the saviour of his troubled former club. Borussia Moenchengladbach, which has fallen into the cellar of the Bundesliga. Heynckes, who coached Real Madrid to the champions cup triumph last season and is now between jobs, said in the latest issue of Sport Bild magazine published Tuesday that he had been offered every management position at the club. "I was even offered the job of president. I refused. I'm a trainer and not a manager," Heynckes said. Moenchengladbach was one of Europe's top clubs in the 1970s, sweeping to five Bundesliga titles and two UEFA cup. But this season, the once-proud club is in disarray and fighting desperately to avoid relegation. Heynckes is not the only former star of the team that has refused to help save the club they once made famous. Guenter Netzer, now a television commentator, and former German national team coach Berti Vogts have also stayed away. Another player on the famous '70s team, Rainer Bonhoff, took over as coach in mid-season as Moenchengladbach went through a shakeup. But Bonhoff is not as respected in Germany as his three former teammates. Heynckes has also been mentioned as a possible coach for another troubled team, the German national team. He had been offered the position when Vogts resigned after the World Cup, but refused because his wife was ill. Heyncke's wife has since made a recovery, while Germany's new coach, Erich Ribbeck, is under fire after a humiliating 3-0 loss last week to the United States.

Policeman battered by German hooligans given military honour

PARIS (AP) - French officials on Tuesday awarded a military honour to a policeman who was brutally beaten by German soccer hooligans during the World Cup. Daniel Nivel was among 21 officers who were honoured after being killed or seriously injured in the line of duty in 1998. In total, eight officers were killed and 13 seriously injured. Nivel, 44, was savagely beaten in the head by thugs after the June 21 match between Germany and Yugoslavia in the northern city of Lens. He spent six weeks in a coma and is still continuing a long recovery from the attack. Nivel was seen in public for the first time since the attack on Friday when defense minister Alain Richard awarded him the military medal. Four Germans, aged between 23 and 30, are due to go on trial in the western German city of Essen on April 30 for their alleged part in the beating. Another suspect is

Schalke striker has career-threatening injury

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) - An ongoing tendon injury is threatening to end the career of Dutch striker Rene Eijkelkamp, his German club Schalke said Tuesday. The 34-year-old has been ordered to pause three weeks for treatment while the injury to his left leg is examined. He has edema, water built up around the bones, and tuns a high risk the tendon will tear. "I'm optimistic that he has a 50 per cent chance to be healed," said Schalke team physician Armin Langhorst. Schalke, UEFA Cup winner two years ago, has struggled all season with injuries to key players including libero Olaf Thon and Belgium international Marc Wilmonts.

Nebiolo expresses support for Samaranch

ROME (AP) - Primo Nebiolo, the powerful president of track and field's world governing body, on Tuesday offered his first formal support for embattled IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch. Nebiolo's statement was issued through the council of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), over which Nebiolo presides. "The council is convinced that Samaranch is exceptionally qualified to navigate the IOC through these troubled waters," the ASOIF statement said. "At a time like this when strength, wisdom and determination are absolutely necessary to reinforce faith in the Olympic movement, his experience and leadership cannot be questioned." Samaranch has faced numerous calls for his resignation from newspapers and personalities outside the IOC as a result of the corruption scandals surrounding the Olympic bidding process. Nebiolo, who is an IOC member and president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, has been unsually silent on the Olympic crisis. The quotes in the press release were attributed to an ASOIF spokesman and not Nebiolo himself. In addition to Nebiolo, the other members of the ASOIF council are: George Killian, United States (basketball); Aldo Notari, Italy (baseball); Rene Roch, France (fencing); Lu Shenrong, China (badminton); Paul Henderson, Canada (sailing); Juan Angel Calzado, Spain (field hockey),

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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

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This season he has regain

aten. French solo sailor rescued unharmed in South Pacific

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) - French sailor Isabellé Autissier was rescued unharmed Tuesday, 24 hours after capsizing in heavy seas in the South Pacific during the around alone race, the Chilean navy said.

Cmdr. Nilton Duran said Autissier was rescued at 11:37 a.m. (1437 GMT) by fellow competitor Giovanni Soldini of İtaly.

"The French sailor is now safe and in good condition aboard the Italian vacht Fila," Duran told the Associated Press by telephone.

He said the Fila was continuing in the regatta and was expected to reach Punte Del Este, Uruguay, the end of the third leg, in 7-9 days.

Autissier was the overall leader of the regatta when her French 18-metre (60foot) boat Prb capsized Monday about halfway between Auckland, New Zeland. and South America.

The yacht "was overturned and was completely lost by the bad weather front," Duran said.

He said Autissier was rescued 3,333 kilometres west of Punta Arenas, Chile's southernmost city 3,000 kilometres from Santiago.

"Isabelle is aboard, everything is fine, Autissier's team headquarters in Paris said in a dispatch quoting Soldini.

Autissier sent a mayday and made a brief call to her call over crackling interfer-



Navigator Isabelle Autissier of France had capsized and taken to a life raft in the southern Pacific ocean, race organiser Dan McConnell said on Tuesday. Isabelle Autissier of France, the leader of the 'Around the World Alone' yacht race is seen as she departs Auckland's Waitemata harbour at the start of the third leg of the race heading to Uruguay's Punta del Este in this February 6 file photo. The 'Around Alone' race is the longest race on earth for an individual in any sport. The singlehanded sailing race cover 27,000 miles of the world's roughest and most remote oceans (Reuters photo)

apparently being capsized by 35-knot winds and waves as high as 12 said Peter metres. Rachtman, an Aucklandbased race director.

An earlier report on the around alone race's official Internet said Autissier's team headquarters had received a radio emergency beacon was set

Soldini was approximately 320 kilometres northeast of Autissier's position when he received word of his 42-year-old competi-tor's plight at 1423 GMT by race organisers and

turned toward her. He also was facing beavy seas and 12 metres and

Paris headquarters after ence shortly before the race organisers estimated Zealand, during the search he was at least 10 hours and rescue efforts.

> Duran said weather had improved by the time Soldini reached Autissier. winds having which slowed to 25-27 knots.

from Autissier.

The officer said the Chilean navy kept contact with stations in Honolulu and Alameda in the United States and Auckland, New

Despite holding the overall lead when the fleet Auckland, departed Autissier was in second place in the third leg early Monday before her boat capsized. At 0940 GMT yesterday Autissier was trailing leg leader Marc Thiercelin by

Rodman remains a man without a team

LOS ANGELES (AP) — While Dennis Rodman and the Los Angeles Lakers seem to want each other, they aren't together yet. -- -When — or if — it does take place appears to be up to the eccentric seven-time

rebounding champion. "I heard he's coming," Shaquille O'Neal, the NBA's leading scorer, said Monday after another practice came and went without an appearance from Rodman. O'Neal said he hasn't spoken with

the Worm since last week. "To be honest, I haven't heard much about it." reserve forward Corie Blount said. "I haven't heard the players talk about it, the coaches."

A source close to the Lakers told the Associated Press late Sunday that Rodman was expected to sign with the team by today and be in uniform for tonight's game against

Charlotte. Lakers spokesman John Black said there was "absolutely nothing new to report," but acknowledged that executives Jerry West and Mitch Kupchak have been talking with Rodman's agents.

A couple hours earlier, Black answered his home telephone by saying, "Dennis Rodman Hotline." Several players said specu-

lation over Rodman's expected arrival hasn't been a distraction, but the Lakers enter tonight's game with a disappointing 3-3 record. "I think I'll just leave that Dennis Rodman (File photo)

— Ghana's Anthony Yeboah,

despite a rocky start in the

Bundesliga. Tuesday signed

a one-year contract extension

The talented but erratic for-

mer Leeds United forward

was the Bundesliga's leading marksman in 1993 and 1994

at Eintracht Frankfurt, before

having problems with then-

Last season, the 32-year-

old striker signed with

Hamburg and promptly went

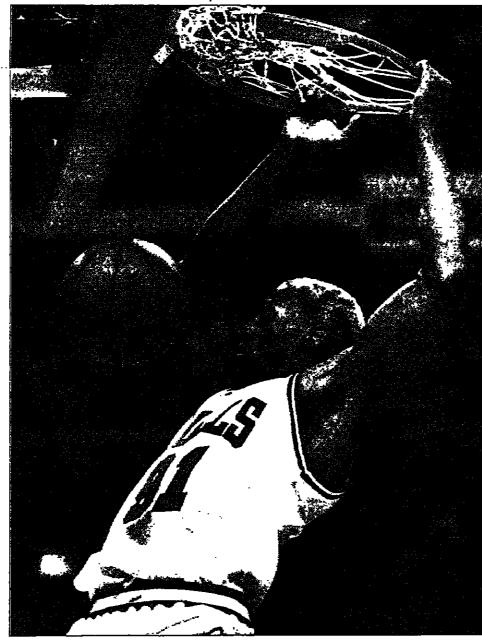
1,231 minutes of play with-

out connecting for a goal.

This season he has regained

coach Jupp Heynckes.

with Hamburger SV.



midfielder,

signed a three-year contract

with the club starting next

Kovac, raised in Germany

but with a Croatian passport,

has been a key player for sec-

Hamburg also announced ond-place Leverkusen this

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season.

"Last season was the hard-

est of my career. I want to

thank the coaches and fans

that they stood behind me

when things weren't going

that Robert Kovac, a Bayer

so well." said Yeboah.

diplomatic Residents.

Yeboah's contract, despite scoreless

streak, extended with Hamburg

HAMBURG, Germany (AP) some of his scoring Leverkusen

prowress.

up to everybody else to talk about," Lakers coach Del Harris said when asked about Rodman.

. "In my contract, it says to play basketball," reserve forward Travis Knight said. "I just show up at practice and at games and play as hard as I can. I don't really give it much mind. I've got enough to worry about doing my iob."

Derek Harper, at 37 the oldest player on the team and the same age as Rodman, said over the weekend that "any distraction was going to be a cancer for this team.

'I think he can help us as a player here," Harper said Monday, "If and when it happens, it happens. That's the only approach you can have. We haven't, I haven't, talked about it with anybody except the media."

The Lakers first expressed an interest in Rodman two weeks ago. They can only offer the veterans' minimum of \$1 million, for this lockout-shortened season, and that money is diminishing with every game Rodman misses.

Starting tonight, they'll play six games in eight days. Rodman has played on five of the last 10 NBA champions, including the last three with the Chicago Bulls, who opted not to pursue him last month after Michael Jordan announced his retirement.

Representatives Rodman's new agents from International Creative Management could not be reached Monday.

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IOC official suggests ditching profit sharing deal

LONDON (AP) — Sydney Olympic organisers can ease their financial troubles by reallocating more than Australian dhs 100 million (\$66 million) from a profit-sharing deal back into the games, the IOC's marketing chief said Tuesday.

"You would solve the financing issue in a stroke of a pen," marketing director Michael Payne said.

Raising money from corporate sponsors for the 2000 Sydney games has become a major concern, especially in the wake of the Olympic corruption scandals.

With Sydney about Australian dlrs 200 mil-lion (\$130 million) short of its target for sponsorship revenues, Payne suggested the controversial profit deal should be reviewed.

"There is no way the games should be compromised because of a profit deal that we were opposed to." he told the Associated Press in a telephone interview from IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. "This money should be put back into the games."

Payne said the IOC warned the Australians three years ago against projecting a surplus for the games. Sydney organisers have predicted a surplus of Australian dlrs 30 million (\$ 17.7 million).

"The IOC was saying, "this is crazy to be talking about a profit now. You should wait until the day after the closing ceremony," Payne said. "For various reasons, they wanted to lock down issues on profit two or three years ago. Maybe that should be reopened. There's more than dlrs 100 million involved."

Under terms of the IOC's contract with Olympic cities, 90 per cent of any surplus goes to the host country and 10 per cent to the IOC. Of the 90 per cent set aside for the host country, 10 per cent goes to the National Olympic

The profit-sharing arrangement for Sydney has gone through several changes.

In a deal with the new South Wales government, the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) agreed to give up its veto power over key decisions in exchange for a guaranteed sum of Australian dhrs 100 million (\$ 66 million). Later, the NSW government effectively bought out the AOC's right to the money. The funds go to the AOC whether there is a surplus

"That money has now been taken off the balance books," Payne said. "In hindsight, it might have been premature to talk about profit."

The IOC's share of the profit deal was eventually capped at Australian dlrs 13.5 million (\$ 8.95 million). The IOC has said it would earmark most of its share to a special fund for sports programmes in Australia and the rest of the Oceania region.

Payne said IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch has made clear the international committee is ready to help out if the organising committee and government request it, including reconsidering the IOC's profit share.

"It would seem the first place to start is to look at the whole profit deal, which we thought was a bad idea in the first place," Payne said. We would never do a deal of this nature again. Never in a million years."

Even before the corruption scandals involving Olympic bid cities, Sydney was struggling to meet its Australian dirs 2.6 billion (\$ 1.65 billion) budget.

Specifically, organisers have fallen short of their Australian dirs 874 million (\$542 million) sponsorship target.

This has led to fears that budget cutbacks will be made that could affect the games.

In Sydney, Olympics Minister Michael knight suggested for the first time Tuesday that the Olympics could get by without the extra sponsorship revenue.

"You can run a pretty fantastic Olympic games on dlrs 2.4 billion (\$ 1.52 million)," he

Payne said Sydney organisers erred by setting their latest sponsorship revenues too high.

"SOCOG has twice met their targets, and got the most successful marketing programme we've ever seen for the games," he said. "If it's a problem, it's because they were too successful early on. They allowed the targets to continue to be raised.

"I think the current target is wrong," he said. "It never should have been raised to this height.

It's like a high jumper.
"You can keep raising the height, but eventually he can no longer make it over the bar."

Jacques Rogge, the IOC executive board member who heads the IOC coordination commission for the Sydney games, said he is optimistic that Sydney will raise enough money.

"Yes, there is still some revenue to be found, but it's too soon to be worried." he said in a phone interview from Belgium. "I'm very relaxed about it.

"We are vigilant. But today no one can say there is a danger, a shortfall, a problem. We'll have a better idea in june after ticket sales have started and new efforts have begun to find new

Redskins acquire Brad Johnson, lose Green to Rams

WASHINGTON (R) — The in 1992. Washington Redskins acquired from the Minnesota Vikings them to sign with the St. Louis

Rams. The Redskins said they had given the Vikings three draft selections — picks in the first and third rounds in 1999 and a second-round pick in 2000 -to acquire Johnson, who lost his starting job to Randall Cunningham in Minnesota

while sidelined with a pair of injuries. Green, who had replaced Gus Frerotte as the starting quarterback for the Redskins, signed a four-year deal with St. Louis. Green now unseats

Tony Banks in St. Louis. "I think Brad Johnson can do a number of positive things for our football team," said Redskins head coach Norv Turner.

"He's a very accurate passer with a career completion percentage of over 60 per cent and an excellent touchdown to interception ratio. He has proven that he can help get a team into the playoffs."

Johnson is entering his eighth NFL season after the Vikings drafted him in the ninth round out of Florida State He opened last season as

his right leg in the second Cunningham in the ninth week but fractured his right thumb in the game. He came back in week 15, completing four of seven passes for one touchdown.

Johnson finished the year 65of-101 for 747 yards and seven touchdowns. Johnson signed a five-year,

\$15 million contract toward the end of the 1997 season but the Vikings re-signed Cunningham — who ended a two-year retirement — to a multi-year extension, which left Johnson as an expensive

"In this day and age of salary cap restraints it is virtually impossible to have two starting quarterbacks," Vikings general manager Tim Connolly said. "We were in the fortunate situation to trade one of our quar-

terbacks for future players." Terms of Green's contract were not disclosed but the deal is believed to be worth about \$16 million. He rejected a fouryear, \$12 million offer from the Redskins.

"I think Trent's heart was in Washington, but when he visit-

ed here and learned what St. Louis was trying to accomquarterback Brad Johnson Minnesota's starter but broke plish, he decided the Rams were his team," said Jim Steiner, Green's a

The 28-year-old Green, born in St. Louis and an area high school star, was one of the NFL's biggest surprises this season. After attempting just one pass in his first four years Green took the starting job from Frerotte in 1998 and threw for 3,441 yards, 23 touchdowns and 11 interceptions in 15 games.

"I always say you don't get any better if you don't take any risks." Rams coach Dick Vermeil said. "He was one of the true starting quarterbacks available in free agency."

The signing of Green signals the end of Banks' three-year run as the Rams' starter. Banks, who is eligible for restricted free agency, compiled a passer rating of only 68.6 and threw twice as many interceptions (14) as touchdowns (7) before suffering a season-ending knee injury in Week 15.

"In all probability, he will not be back," Vermeil said. "I believe Tony will be a successful starting quarterback. It just doesn't look like it will be

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Gulf war of words escalates; Iraq denies threats against neighbours

President Saddam Hussein's threat to hit air bases in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia used by U.S. and British warplanes sparked a call here Tuesday to chop off the 'head of the snake" in power in Baghdad.

Deputy Minister Tareq Aziz denied during a visit to Turkey that Baghdad was threatening to strike at Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, but the official Iraqi press kept up its onslaught against its two Gulf neighbours.

The White House warned Baghdad, meanwhile, not to contemplate the use of force against its neighbours for allowing U.S. and British planes to use their territory to enforce "no-fly" zones over

Iraq.
The latest Iraqi threats provoked the Saudi press on Tuesday to escalate the war of words which has raged since the December U.S.-British air war on Iraq.

"There is only one solution: To chop off the head of the snake and expel the gang which uses fire and blood to govern Baghdad and Iraq," said Al Nadwa, which like other Saudi papers reflects Riyadh's official views. Al Riyadh, another daily,

scoffed at Saddam's threat on Sunday to strike at the Saudi and Kuwaiti air bases used as launchpads by U.S. and British warplanes to patrol the skies of southern Iraq.

"This individual is incapable of even hitting the tail of a plane overflying his terri-tory, it said. If Saddam could damage the finger of an American or British soldier, he would have done it without threat or warning."

The reaction in the Kuwaiti press to the Iraqi threats was as strong as in Riyadh, with the top selling newspaper calling for the use of military force against Baghdad.

'The international community must make Iraq bear responsibility for the consequences of its threats," said Al Anbaa. "And if Iraq is not dissuaded, there is nothing left but force, it's the only language that it understands."

Kuwait's emir told a Qatari newspaper that his tiny country was used to threats from its northern neighbour.

"Iraq's latest threats are nothing new or unusual. We're used to it," Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah told Al Raya newspaper. They "confirm Iraq's intentions towards Kuwait and the countries of the region." The patrols over the no-fly Desert Fox air waged by the U.S.-led allies.

clashes since operation

Five people were killed in air strikes on Monday, according to Baghdad. The same day, U.S. warplanes based in Turkey also attacked targets in an exclusion zone

over northern Iraq.

northern Iraq.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo on Tuesday, criticised Turkey's decision to allow U.S. warplanes to use the Turkish base of Incirlik for patrols of the no-fly zone over

"If Turkey continues to provide a launchpad for attacks against Iraq then this base is certainly concerned like those bases in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia used by American aircraft," Ramadan said.

Deputy Prime Minister Aziz, however, denied that Iraq was issuing threats.

"Iraq is not threatening its neighbours ... The real fact is that foreign airplanes are flying from neighbouring countries and attacking Iraq ... So who is threatening who?" Aziz said in a press conference in Ankara.

He also appealed to Turkey once again to stop U.S. and British planes from using

zones have led to a series of Incirlik.

"The use of Incirlik] does not serve the best relations between the two countries .. We hope that [Turkey] will put an end to it sooner rather than later," he added.

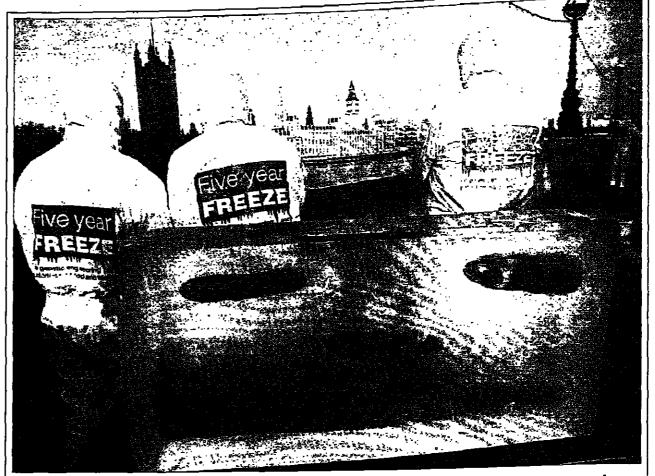
U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned Iraq on Monday that a U.S. response to an attack on Iraq's neighbours would be "swift and sure" and the White House issued the warning anew on Tuesday.

"Any contemplation of that act would be a grave mistake and would be met with a swift response," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.

Iraq's official media ignored Albright's warnings and said Tuesday that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had simply gone too far."

Such aggressive and hateful behaviour must be confronted with great determination ... to bury the hatred of the evil-doers and foil their criminal policy against our people and country," said Al

Jumhuriya newspaper.
The leaders of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have gone too far and expanded the sea of blood which separates them from the Iraqi people," it said, warning they would be made to "pay a heavy price."



THUMBS DOWN TO GENETICALLY-MODIFIED FOOD: Anti-GM (genetically-modified foods) campaigners, including Friends of the Earth, Tuesday launch their campaign for the British government to impose a five-year ban on GM foods opposite the Houses of Parliament in London with a 3-foot ice cube containing 'mutated' fish

Palestinian lawmaker blocks settlement

Palestinian lawmaker Salah Tamari spent Tuesday in a tent set up several metres from where Jewish settlers are trying to carve a road through a West Bank hilltop claimed by Palestinian vii-

Protest tents have become a Tamari trademark in his fight against Israeli settlement expansion. In 1997, when Israel broke ground for 6,500 homes for Jews on a Jerusalem hilltop, Tamari set up a protest tent on the construction site at Jabal Abu Ghneim.

While Palestinian officials would make short trips to the tent, Tamari. a legislator from the Bethlehem district, did not leave the tent for about a month, not even to attend council meetings. Israel has since gone ahead

with construction at Jabal and has made repeated Abu Guneim and Tamari has moved his tent to another location, this time to the Herodean desert Bethlehem, where Jewish settlers have set up mobile homes on several hilltops and are trying to construct a

route linking them together. They are not only bulldozing our land but our faith in peace," Tamari said, using a bottle of mineral water to point to the new trailer

The Palestinians want to establish an independent state on the West Bank, and fear their chances become more remote with each house erected by Jewish settlers throughout areas Israel occupied in the 1967 Mideast war.

The United States has said Jewish settlement expansion hinders chances for peace

requests for Israel to freeze settlement activity. Israeli Prime

Benyamin Netanyahu supports what he terms "natural growth," in already existing settlements. Peace Now, a settlement

watchdog group, said Tuesday the population in the 10 largest Jewish settlements in the West Bank has increased by 5.9 per cent in the first nine months of 1998. Peace Now said the

increase is three times the rate of natural growth. Settler spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar said she would not comment on the Peace Now figures, but said the settlement population was rising.
Shortly after Netanyahu

signed a land-for-peace deal with the Palestinians in October, Jewish settlers

drive in the West Bank. Staking their claim to land Palestinians hope to receive in future deals, settlers set up mobile homes on several West Bank hilltops where they plan to erect new settlements. The Israeli government has not taken any action regarding the new

began an intensive settlement

Tamari said that settlement expansion was suffocating surrounding Palestinian villages and threatening their water resources.

He warned that Palestinian anger was on the rise as a result.

They are pushing the Palestinians to resist." Tamari said, noting that several villagers scuffled Monday with Jewish settlers working on

Unknown group warns Americans, **Britons to** leave Yemen

SANAA (AP) — A group claiming to be affiliated with Saudi Islamist Osama Ben Laden warned Tuesday it will kill Americans and Britons in Yemen if they do not leave within 12 days.

"If you stay, then you've chosen death... We'll make you pay for every drop of Arab and Muslim blood you shed since the crusades," said the was signed "Army of Suicidals, Group No. 66, Ben Laden Militant Wing."

The statement by the unknown group was addressed to American and British families in Yemen. It set a deadline of 276 hours. starting at 4 a.m. local time Tuesday, for all Americans and Britons to leave Yemen. There was no explanation for the

The statement was made available to the Associated Press by Western diplomats who did not want to be identified further.

The U.S. embassy said it has not received such a statement. But Americans living in the capital Sanaa said they knew about the threat, mainly by word of mouth.

"Pack up and go home," the statement said.

"Get out of this land which has nothing to offer you but hatred and violence. And when you go - take your filthy husbands with you. Or else their rotten corpses will be shipped out to you in coffins." the statement warned

It said those remaining would be attacked with anthrax.

The warning coincides with claims by the Taleban militia in Afghanistan that Ben Laden, blamed by the United States for the Aug. 7 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, had disappeared.

About 1,000 Americans and Britons live in Yemen, most of them oil industry workers. teachers and consultants.

Many Britons have left Yemen since December, following a spate of killings and kidnappings of British citi-

zens. Four Westerners, three of them British, were killed Dec. 28 when Yerneni security forces tried to rescue them from their Islamist kidnappers. Five men are on trial for the killings.

Ten Westerners, eight of them Britons of Pakistani origin, are also on trial, accused of links with Islamist groups and charged with planning terroust attacks in Yemen.

Musa says CIA weapons report shows 'double standard'

CAIRO (AP) — Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Tuesday said a CIA report on weaponry reflected a "double-standard policy" because it talked of Egyptian missiles but never mentioned Israel's nuclear weapons.

Musa, clearly angered at Egypt's inclusion on the list, told reporters that omitting any mention of Israel could be read as implicit support for the Jewish state's arsenal.

The report is "new evidence of the double-standard policy and the lack of seriousness," Musa said. He added: "Such reports should be serious and

speak of the reality. They should not serve certain aims or a certain country." The CIA's Non-prolifer-

ation Centre last week presented a report to Congress that listed Russia, China and North Korea as the key "supplier nations" for weapons of mass destruction. It said Egypt. Iran, Iraq, India. Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Sudan and, again, North Korea, were the key consumer nations of these

Egypt, a U.S. ally and beneficiary of billions of dollars in annual aid from Washington, has purchased missile technology and components from North Korea, the report

Although Egypt in 1979 was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, Egyptians remain wary of the Jewish state and concerned about its weaponry. Israel has never admitted

publicly to a nuclear arsenal, but Western intelligence reports say it has a significant nuclear stock-

Arabs have long been angered over Washington's policy of ignoring Israeli development weapons while criticising Arab pur-

'Lockerbie agreement within days'

CAIRO (AFP) - A final mediation efforts by Saudi agreement in the Lockerbie bombing case could be led to "positive results" in reached in the next few days, Egyptian Foreign Minister Libyans suspected of carrying Amr Musa said here Tuesday on his return from talks with Libyan leader Muammar

Qadhafi. "A final agreement on Lockerbie could be finalised in the next few days because the guarantees [demanded by have blamed on Libya. Libya] are no longer an obstacle to resolving the case," Musa told reporters after briefing President Hosni Mubarak on his talks with Qadhafi.

"I hope the progress made recently will lead to an agreement allowing for the lifting of sanctions imposed on Libya." Musa added,

Libya said Saturday that Committee is allowed to grant and open a new one," he said.

Arabia and South Africa had negotiations to bring two out the 1988 Lockerbie bombing to trial in the Netherlands. A total of 270 people were killed when a Pan Am Airliner was blown up over Lockerbie,

Musa also insisted Tuesday that he had not violated a U.N. ban on flights to Libya by flying to Tripoli. He did not elab-

The United Nations imposed an air and arms embargo on Libya in 1992 for its refusal to extradite the two

Libyan suspects.

Scotland, in a bombing which the United States and Britain

U.N. Sanctions

but it was not immediately clear if Musa had received such an exemption.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid, meanwhile, welcomed a recent series of moves to resolve the Lockerbie case.

In an interview with the Egyptian government radio station Voice of the Arabs, the head of the Cairo-based Arab League praised efforts by Saudi Arabia and South Africa to defuse the Lockerbie crisis.

Abdul Meguid, who is on a visit to Kuwait, described Libya's position as "positive" and "flexible" and offered his support to Tripoli "for the

steps to come."
"We need to turn this page

bodyguards knock a fan unconscious

Israeli prime minister's

OR YEHUDA (AFP) - A to his feet, but he was still fan of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu was knocked unconscious by bodyguards Tuesday when he tried to shake the hand of

the Israeli leader, witnesses The man approached a giving a speech and bodyguards feared that a roll of paper he was carrying in his hand was hiding a weapon. Netanyahu's spokesman

Aviv Bushinsky told AFP. One bodyguard from the Shin Bet secret service jumped on the man from the stage and kicked him unconscious while other security agents hustled the prime minister away, he said.

Once guards realised the

unconscious.

The man, whose identity was not immediately given. was taken to hospital in an ambulance but Bushinsky said he was not seriously hurt.

"As soon as the man is out stage where Netanyahu was of hospital, the prime minister will visit him." he said. Security around the prime minister has been drastically tightened since Premier Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in November 1995 by

a right-wing Jewish radical. Netanyahu, who is cam-paigning for May general elections, was attending the inauguration of an institute in Or Yehuda dedicated to his brother, Jonathan, a special forces officer killed resman was unarmed, cuing Israelis held hostage Netanyahu tried to help him by hijackers in 1976.

States support on a French plan to lift the oil embargo against Iraq if Baghdad will allow international inspections of its weapons programmes to resume. In an interview with U.S. journalists here carried by the New York Times. Chirac said "President Saddam Hussein is responsible for all the miseries of the Iraqi people." Speaking ahead of a meeting in Washington with President Bill Clinton on Friday, Chirac said "the more the [Iraqi] population suffers, the more it rallies to Saddam Hussein and strengthens him." The French president went on: "Getting

Israel accused of role in Iran murders

TEHRAN (AFP) — A former commander of Iran's revolutionary guards accused Israel on Tuesday of involvement in last year's string of murders of dissidents and writers in the Islamic republic. "The Israeli secret services were behind the recent murders and political assassinations in Iran as well as an attack in November against a group of American tourists," General Mohsen Rezai told a press conference here. Rezai, who is currently secretary of a powerful government decision-making body, said that the murders were "an attempt [by Israel] to prevent any... normalisation of relations between Iran and the

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) - The Islamist group Hamas warned Tuesday of a "serious deterioration" in the condition of several of its activists who have been on hunger strike for more than three weeks in Palestinian jails. There has been a serious deterioration in the health of a number of the political prisoners held in the prisons of Ineid and Jericho who have been on hunger strike for 23 days," the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said in a statement. The statement, which listed 15

Fighting intensifies on eastern front of Horn of Africa war

ASSAB AND ADDIS ABABA beavy artillery, armoured vehicles. (AFP) — Fighting on the eastern military rations and a water reservoir front of the border war between at the support centre," said the com-Eritrea and Ethiopia intensified Tuesday, with Ethiopian MiG-23s in fell. action and Addis Ababa reporting

heavy exchanges of artillery fire. The front, centred on the town of Burie, is some 70 kilometres south of Eritrea's strategic Red Sea port of Assab and close to the border with Djibouti,

No reports came in of fighting on the western and central fronts, the first to flare when the fighting reignited on Feb. 6 after a seven-month lull. In Assab, an Eritrean army officer said three Ethiopian MiG-23 fighterbombers attacked a water reservoir located some 50 kilometres from

Assab itself, but missed their target. In Addis Ababa, an Ethiopian govemment communiqué said Ethiopian MiG-23s bombed an Eritrean army logistical support centre at Harsele. which it said was 20 kilometres west of Assab.

The attack, in response to an Eritrean artiflery bombardment, "destroyed weapons and munitions,

at the support centre," said the communiqué, issued shortly after night

"The Eritreans also suffered the

loss of military personnel." it said, adding that the fighting on the eastern front had since halted. Ethiopian spokeswoman Salome Tadesse told AFP in Addis Ababa that

the two sides had exchanged "heavy artillery fire" at the front. The two sides agreed in June last year to a U.S.-brokered moratorium on air strikes, and Asmara warned last Friday that it would retaliate in kind if Addis Ababa continued to use

its air force. The region attacked Tuesday does not lie among disputed areas of unproductive terrain along the 1.000kilometre-long border which were under Ethiopian administration until Eritrea occupied them in May last

Eritrean troops were Tuesday deployed in force near a defensive wall protecting Assab. The wreckage of an Ethiopian

assault helicopter, with the corpses of the crew still inside, lay close to the high rampart of the wall. It was shot down by Eritrean gunners on Sunday. Asmara said its mission had been to strafe Eritrean troops.

Assab was lost to the Addis Ababa government when Eritrea was recognised as Africa's newest state in May 1993, two years after de facto independence followed the ouster of Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam by Ethiopian and Eritrean rebel armies.

Ethiopia could be tempted to try to capture Assab, one of Eritrea's two Red Sea ports, some diplomats esti-

The whole region is particularly sensitive since it lies close to the border with little Dilbouti, which Ethiopia has been using for the greater part of its maritime trade, including the fuel necessary for its military. About 250 Ethiopian lorries leave Djibouti every day, half of them fuel tankers.

Eritrean troops could seek to attack Ethiopian supply convoys as they did until sovereignty has been indepenin October last year - at the risk of dently determined.

provoking France, which has a large naval and military base in Djibouti and has joint defence accords with the country.

The European Union has announced a decision to send a good offices mission to the region, while Yemen, across the Red Sea from Eritrea, has offered to host talks and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has already presented a peace plan.

In the view of the Addis Ababa government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, there is nothing to negotiate. It wants President Issaias Afeworki's side to accept the OAU plan, which provides for a withdrawal of Eritrean troops from disputed territory, the deployment of peacekeepers for six months, and a neutral commission to redraw the ill-defined colonial bor-

Asmara considers it unreasonable to accept demands to pull out of the Badme zone on the western front, taken early in the war, and allow Ethiopian administrators back there

NEWS IN BRIEF

Four people gunned down at meeting

DHAKA (AP) — Gunmen opened fire at a public meeting in northern Bangladesh Tuesday killing four men and injuring 10 others, officials said. The victims were leaders of the National Socialist Party (NSP) an ally of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. The gummen, believed to be from the banned East Bengal Communist Party, a rival of the NSP, rushed out from a nearby paddy field and attacked the public meeting which was being held in the open in Kushtia district, 130 kilometres northwest of Dhaka, the national capital. The four men, who were sitting on a raised platform, died immediately, officials said. People attending the meeting panicked and ran for shelter. Senior officials at Kushtia said they have launched a massive hunt for the killers.

Israel hits suspected Hizbollah positions

TYRE (AFP) — An Israeli warplane staged a raid on Tuesday on suspected Hizbollah positions north of the Israeli-occupied so-called "security zone" in southern Lebanon, police said. No casualties were reported in the raid on an area where Iranianbacked Hizbollah guerrillas are active. The Israeli fighterbomber fired two missiles into a valley near the village of Jabal Al Botom, north of the western edge of the buffer zone, police

'Chirac to try to sell Iraqi deal to Clinton'

PARIS (AFP) - President Jacques Chirac hopes to win United rid of Saddam Hussein is easily said, but very difficult to do."

United States and Europe."

'Hunger strikers in serious condition'

detainees as being particularly hard hit, said that the protesters were suffering symptoms ranging from a drop in levels of blood sugar to diarrhoea to vomiting blood. Grenade garme ums deadly tor Thai soldier

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